The Labor Question

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THE LABOR QUESTION

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BY

WASHINGTON GLADDEN

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I

THE CASE AGAINST THE LABOR UNION

I

THE CASE AGAINST THE LABOR UNION

NO sweeping statements can be justly made about existing relations between employers and employed. In many cases they are all that they ought to be. Among employers of labor there are tens of thousands of just-minded, honorable men and women who govern themselves in all their dealings with those who work for them by the Golden Rule; and among wage-workers there are hundreds of thousands of honest and faithful men and women who render cheerful and efficient service to those who employ them. We hear much complaint of

exasperating conditions in domestic service, but if the story were told of all the tender and beautiful friendships between families and their household helpers, it would be a cheering relation. And it is still true, I believe, that where the number of employees is such that the employer is brought into personal contact with all of them, the relations are, in the great majority of cases, amicable and just. The old sweet humanities have not lost their force, and where they have a chance they assert themselves with power. And there are not a few large industrial establishments in which the rights of the people who work with their hands are thoroughly respected.

But the typical employer of today (the only employer known to most working men) is not a human being, but a great corporation; and the typical

employee (the only employee known to most employers) is a unit of labor force, which may be numbered rather than named; and the only relation between the two is that of the "cash nexus," which is represented by the current wage. I am aware that there are cases in which some effort is made to clothe this economic skeleton with flesh and blood — to restore some semblance of a personal quality to this relation between employer and employee — and such attempts are highly commendable; but they do not count for much against the depersonalizing tendencies of the large system of industry. All the important industries except agriculture are carried on in great establishments, employing hundreds, or thousands, or tens of thousands of laborers; capital is massed in great corporations, and the ownership

of it is widely distributed among investors who have no knowledge whatever of the people whom their money is employing. These stockholders are the real employers. The directors and superintendents and general managers are simply their agents; and the real employers, as a rule, know nothing and care little about the welfare of the people who do the work. They have just one interest in the business, which is that the dividends on the stock shall be maintained without reduction; increased, if possible; and paid on the appointed day. We all know how it is. I am a stockholder, in a small way, in one or two industries, and it scarcely occurs to me to look after the welfare of the hired laborers who are doing the work of these industries. I do not know at all what wages they are getting, and I do not

know much about the conditions under which they are doing their work. Perhaps I ought to know, but I do not. And I suppose that a large majority of all the holders of industrial securities are no more conscientious or watchful of the interests of the people of whom they are the responsible employers than I am. When such is the foundation of our industrial system, it is hardly a matter of wonder that the element of human interest and personal friendship should gradually disappear from the relation between employer and employee.

Another fact has some significance. Twenty-five years ago there was much inquiry among employers about industrial partnership, or profit-sharing, as it was rather unhappily named. I had written something about it, and I used to get letters from employers very fre-

quently asking about the working of such plans. These methods are not much talked about in these days. The impulse to associate the men with the masters seems to have spent its force. The lessening importance of this feature in the industries of the present day is an indication of the growing alienation of the two classes.

This condition of estrangement — this growing hostility between the wage-workers and their employers — is the serious fact with which the country is confronted. The fact may be questioned, but those who have been familiar for thirty years with the drift of public feeling can have no doubt about it. The relations between the men who work for wages and the men who pay wages are distinctly less friendly than they were twenty years ago.

Who is to blame for this? Each class blames the other; probably they are both to blame. There are not many quarrels in which the fault is all on one side. Let me see if I can state the case as it lies in the mind of the average employer. There are many employers below the average, intellectually and morally, whom I do not hope to convince; there are some quite above the average who do not need to be convinced; I am not trying to represent either of these classes, but rather that large majority whose opinions and practises tend to prevail in the employing class.

In the judgment of these gentlemen, the trouble in our industries is largely due to trade-unions. It is the misconduct of the trade-unions that is the cause of all this alienation and hostility which now prevails in the in-

dustrial world. Many of these gentlemen say that they are not opposed to trade-unions; that they believe in them when properly constituted and managed. What they mean by this we shall see in another article. Others frankly declare that trade-unionism in all its moods and tenses is an unmitigated evil; that the only hope for the country is in its extermination. I have lately heard employers who, on all other subjects, are as kind-hearted and fair-minded as any men I know, saying that, rather than permit any kind of trade-union to get a footing in their works, they would close their factories and go out of business. What all these gentlemen chiefly lay emphasis upon is the misconduct of the unions, many instances of which are specified.

The indictment is easily sustained. It cannot be denied that in the at-

tempt to protect themselves against oppression the unions have made many rules and restrictions which are often extremely vexatious to all who deal with them. All our neighbors are ready with tales of the annoyances and injuries which they have suffered by the enforcement of these petty rules by trade-unions. A woman of fine intelligence living in a country village, not long ago rehearsed to me her own experience with a gang of men who were working on a drain that ran from her house across her lawn. The ditch had been dug and the pipe nearly laid when their quitting time came, at half past four in the afternoon. A violent storm was approaching, and the ditch would be flooded with water and great inconvenience and expense would be caused if the ditch were not filled in; and the

good woman begged these men to throw back the dirt; but they sat down on the bank and would not lift a finger. She took up the shovel herself and filled in a considerable part of it, but they refused to come to her relief. Conduct of this sort is not rare on the part of trade-unionists, and it has done much, not only to exasperate employers, but to alienate the good will of the community at large. The kind of rules which are often insisted upon, regulating the cooperation of the trades, forbidding a plasterer to drive a nail or a plumber to do the simplest task which belongs to a bricklayer, rigidly fixing the hours of labor and making it a misdemeanor for a workman to finish a job if fifteen minutes of work remain at the closing hour — all such petty restrictions are a just cause of complaint. They re-

quire men to act in outrageously disobliging and unneighborly ways; they are a training in ill nature and unfriendliness. Cases frequently come to my knowledge of the behavior of union men acting under the rules of their trade, by which intolerable inconvenience is inflicted, not only upon their employers, but upon customers for whom the work is done. When I hear such stories, I am able to understand why it is that many employers and many persons who do not belong to the employing class are so bitterly hostile to trade-unions. I do not believe that these petty restrictions are necessary to the success of organized labor. On the contrary, I believe that they are a serious hindrance in the way of its progress. The small advantages which are secured by means of them are more than neutral-

ized by the ill will which they engender in the breasts of those whose good will the unions greatly need.

The opposition of the unions to prison labor is another count in the indictment. This rests upon a narrow view of advantage which helps to discredit the unions. Here, again, a small gain to a class is suffered to outweigh a heavy loss to society. The injury which prison labor could inflict upon organized labor is inconsiderable; the damage which would be done to the prisoners by keeping them in idleness is enormous. The unions greatly injure their own cause when they adopt a policy which sacrifices the general welfare to their own interest in a manner so flagrant. The truth is not so clear to all minds as it ought to be that the selfishness of classes or organizations is not less

unsocial than the selfishness of individuals. We can hardly censure the unions very harshly for not having learned this lesson, since the churches have not as yet learned it. Churches often act toward other churches in a manner quite as heartless as do trade-unions toward unorganized labor; churches often wantonly sacrifice the interests of the Kingdom of God to their own sectarian advantage. Nevertheless, such conduct is reprehensible, whether done under the lead of the walking delegate or the denominational promoter, and those who practise it deservedly suffer the loss of public favor.[1]

It is often charged against the unions that they cripple production by restricting the output of industry through deliberately reducing the speed of their

[1] See Appendix I.

labor and conspiring to make the job last as long as possible. There are those who believe that it is the conscious policy of all unionists to get the largest possible wage and do the least possible work in return for it. I think it quite possible that there are some working men who would regard this as a legitimate policy, just as there are not a few employers who mean to give the laborer no more than they must and to get out of him as much work as they can. Undoubtedly the notion has prevailed among working men that there exists a definite amount of work to be done, and that it is good policy for those who are working by the hour to use up as many hours as possible in the performance of the work. That policy, however, does not control all unionists. The more intelligent among them

are fully aware of its foolishness. "To do too much work," says John Mitchell, "is supposed, sometimes, to be 'hogging it,' to be taking the bread out of another man's mouth. This may occasionally be more or less true, although even in such cases the employer has rights which should be respected and a man should do — as he ordinarily does do — a fair day's work for a fair day's wage. For the whole of society, however, the theory is not true. Within certain limits, the more work done, the more remains to be done. . . . The man who earns large wages in a blacksmith's shop creates a demand for labor when he spends his wages in shoes, clothes, furniture, or books; and a large production tends to make these products cheaper. To render work more expensive merely for the sake of restrict-

ing output is to lessen the amount of work that will be done, and it is only by doing a fair day's work that a fair day's wage can be permanently maintained. The wages of working men, sooner or later, fall with any unreasonable restriction on the output; and, what is of still more importance, the habit of slowing up work, permanently incapacitates the workman for continued and intense effort." This extract shows that one labor leader, at least, recognizes the fatuity of do-lessness, and a fact so patent is not likely to be long concealed from the rank and file of unionists.[1]

In one respect the policy of restriction is justifiable. In piece-work the tendency is always toward an unjust and oppressive reduction of wages.

[1] See Appendix I.

The most rapid and skilful workers set the pace, and the employer is inclined to fix the price so that they can make only a reasonable day's wages. This brings the average workman's earnings down to a very low figure. In such cases the protest of the unions against speeding and price-cutting is not unreasonable. Some adjustments need to be made by which men of exceptional skill may get the advantage of their superior ability without unfairly lowering the compensation of those who are equally faithful, but somewhat less expert.

It is, however, in connection with the enforcement of their demands for improved conditions by means of strikes that the gravest charges are brought against the unions. There are those who deny the right of the

unions to use the weapon of the strike; who assert that the resort to this method of industrial warfare is wholly unjustifiable. The discussion of this question must be deferred until the following chapter. I must ask my readers to let me assume that this right belongs to organized labor. Perhaps they may be willing to allow, for the sake of the argument, that if one man may decline to work for less than a certain wage, or more than a certain number of hours, several men may unite in this refusal; and that it is only by uniting with others that any working man can secure consideration of his claims. I do not, therefore, admit that their assertion of the right to strike is any part of the case against the unions. At present I am concerned with those concomitants of strikes which are rightly held up to

reprobation — the violence and brutality, the coercion and vandalism, which frequently attend industrial conflicts.

The existence of such conditions is undeniable and deplorable, and the greater part of the odium from which unionism is suffering in the public mind is due to these conditions. Working men who take the places which the strikers have left are insulted, beaten, sometimes killed; the property of the employer is destroyed; his buildings are burned or blown up by dynamite; his business is assailed by criminal depredation.

For all such deeds of lawlessness there is neither justification nor excuse. They are utterly and brutally wrong; they simply mark a reversion to barbarism. Men have a right to unite in a demand for better industrial con-

ditions and to unite in a refusal to work unless those conditions are supplied; they have a right to dissuade other men from taking the places which they have vacated, and to use all the moral influence at their command to this end; but when they resort to coercion and violence in enforcing this demand, they pass beyond the limits of toleration and become enemies of society. There is no room in American civilization for practises of this nature; and the unions have no business on their hands more urgent than that of putting an end to coercion and violence in connection with strikes, no matter at what cost to themselves. They can never win by these methods. They succeed only in arraying against themselves the bitter and determined opposition of those classes in society without whose

support they cannot hope to establish their claim.[1]

An intelligent observer called my attention the other day to what he believed to be a fact — that women of the educated classes are almost universally hostile to unionism. It would not be true of college women; of women in the upper social circles it may be true. There may be other explanations, but one reason for the fact, if fact it be, may be the natural revulsion of the ethical feeling of women against these methods of brutality. The unions can never hope to win by methods which array against them such elements of society.

It is not the enemies of unionism who say this. The men who have the best right to speak for unionism are as clear and positive in their denuncia-

[1] See Appendix I.

tion of violence as could be desired. Only a few days ago I heard a conspicuous public teacher say that the prominent labor leaders had never discountenanced violence. It is to be feared that many of our public teachers are not in the way of finding out what is really said by labor leaders. Take these words of John Mitchell:

"Above all and beyond all, the leader entrusted with the conduct of a strike must be alert and vigilant in the prevention of violence. The strikers must be made constantly aware of the imperative necessity of remaining peaceable. . . . Under no circumstances should a strike be allowed to degenerate into violence. . . . A single act of violence, while it may deter a strike-breaker or a score of them, inflicts much greater and more irreparable damage upon the party

giving than upon the party receiving the blow. . . . It is sometimes claimed that no strike can be won without the use of physical force. I do not believe that this is true, but if it is, it is better that the strike be lost than that it succeed through violence and the commission of outrages. The cause of unionism is not lost through any strike or through any number of strikes, and if it were true that all strikes would fail if physical force could not be resorted to, it would be better to demonstrate that fact and to seek remedy in other directions than to permit strikes to degenerate into conflicts between armed men. . . . The employers are perfectly justified in condemning as harshly as they desire the acts of any striker or strikers who are guilty of violence. I welcome the most sweep-

ing denunciation of such acts, and the widest publicity that may be given to them by the press."

It would be easy to fill pages with such testimony by men who have a right to speak for unionism. That the conduct of strikers sometimes falls below this standard is undeniable. The trade-union is one of many organizations whose members often fail to live up to their ideals. It is true that members of trade-unions frequently resort to coercion and violence, and more often connive at it. When they do, they violate the principles on which unionism rests, and deserve the reprobation of their neighbors.

Some of the acts which are committed in connection with strikes are dastardly. The dynamiting of a street car filled with passengers, or the ditching of a train-load of human beings,

is the act of a savage. As Mr. Mitchell urges, it is no palliation of such an enormity to say that a strike is war, since in all civilized warfare the attack upon non-combatants is considered infamous.

I hope I have made it clear that the resort to violence is not an essential element in trade-unionism; that its leading representatives discountenance and denounce it. Some of the greatest and most successful strikes have been attended by little violence. This was true of the anthracite strike and of the recent strike of the cloakmakers in New York. In connection with many strikes much violence has occurred, and it is the common habit of the newspapers and of a class of social moralists to charge all this upon the strikers. In the great majority of cases, however, the strikers

have little or nothing to do with it. Much of this lawlessness is the work of disorderly and turbulent persons who have no interest in the contest, but who seize upon this opportunity for indulging their destructive propensities. During the recent street railway strike in Columbus, Ohio, nearly one thousand arrests, were made for disorderly conduct, but of these not more than five or six were of striking railway employees. All but one of these five or six were arrested for loitering, and were discharged when it was shown that they were engaged in peaceful picketing. One man was under suspicion of having dynamited a car in which were no passengers. He is awaiting trial. Yet I suppose that the vast majority of those who read in the newspapers the highly colored reports of the street car

atrocities in Columbus were under the impression that all this mischief was done by the striking railway men. That would be assumed by nine out of ten editors or preachers who commented on the news. This is one of the ways in which the case against unionism is made up. Public teachers who mean to be just will exercise some care in getting at the facts before they hold unionists responsible for all the mischief that is done in connection with strikes.

It is true, however, that strikes are frequently attended by a highly inflamed state of public opinion, especially among the working classes. This was true of the late strike in Columbus. The sections of our city inhabitated by the working people were swept by gusts of bitter and angry feeling. It was not alone the hoodlums or the

criminals who were thus excited; the entire body of respectable, industrious working mechanics — men who lived in their own houses — shared in this indignation. Pastors of Protestant churches located in these sections told me that their congregations were practically unanimous in this expression of resentment. Undoubtedly much of the disorderly conduct was the product of this superheated feeling.

"Very true," says the social moralist; "therefore the strikers, after all, are to blame for the violence, for it is they who stirred up all this angry resentment." Just there I beg to demur. It is a very superficial judgment that sees no deeper than this. Such an outbreak of public indignation is due to no mere local irritation; it is due in large part to resentments that have become more or less chronic;

it is the expression of a discontent that is deep-seated; it is the product of causes which the social moralist would better try to understand. The classes among whom this discontent prevails are not, as a rule, "undesirable citizens," nor are they the dupes of agitators or the tools of "muck-rakers." Very many of them are men to whom the methods of modern financiering are well known, and to whom the devious ways of public service promoters are not altogether obscure. They are not unaware of the burdens they are bearing, and they know who have bound them on their shoulders. And they are sometimes able to see in these labor struggles the working of forces which tend to their further oppression. Certain it is that the burdens which special privilege entails are mainly borne by these very classes.

We underrate their intelligence when we assume that they are not aware of this, and we presume on their forbearance when we ask them to ignore it. The whole country is up in arms against these abuses of special privilege, and we can hardly wonder if those who suffer most from them sometimes manifest their resentment in ungentle ways.

I agree with John Mitchell that all this is no justification of violence; that force is no remedy; that every act of brutality damages the doer more than the victim; that there are better weapons for such contests than brickbats or bludgeons. I urged the striking carmen in our late strike to go out and patrol the lines and prevent the stone-throwing. I believe that if they had done it they might have won their strike. But I was

aware that in calling on them for conduct so altruistic and magnanimous, I was setting before them an ideal which few groups even of the classes supposed to be superior could be induced to consider.

All that I now wish to insist upon, however, is that the strikers in any given labor conflict are not to be held wholly responsible for the superheated social atmosphere which surrounds them, and which produces the acts of violence by which strikes are often disfigured. For that dangerous social condition the people who are so eager to put down the violence with an iron hand might often find themselves pretty largely to blame. And in such a disturbance the bystander is sometimes reminded of the story of the wolf who was going to devour the lamb because the lamb had roiled

the water. I do not doubt that the hot words of the strikers in such cases often add fuel to the flame of social discontent, and that the strike is made the occasion of outbreaks of disorder; my only contention is that the deeper causes of this angry feeling must not be ignored. No strike in these days is an isolated phenomenon with a purely local cause; and no one can rationally deal with it who does not comprehend its relation to the prevailing social unrest.

Two other counts in the indictment against unionism must be treated very briefly. The first is the sympathetic strike. I am unable to join in the unqualified condemnation of this method of industrial warfare. The act of a trade-union in supporting an affiliated union in its struggle for better conditions, when no advantage

to itself can be hoped for as the result of its sacrifice, is certainly generous and heroic. The motive is not unworthy. It may be doubted, however, whether it is wise as a general rule for the workers in one union to take up the quarrel of another union. They may be supposed to know the conditions of their own trade; it is nearly impossible for them to know equally well the conditions of other trades, and they may be supporting demands which are unjust and impracticable. Sometimes such a strike involves the violation of a contract, expressed or implied, with their own employers; in such a case they are putting generosity before justice, which is bad morality. The bituminous coal miners were right when they refused to violate their trade agreement with the operators by a sympathetic strike

in support of the anthracite miners. And Mr. Mitchell is teaching good doctrine when he says: "There can be no doubt that, upon the whole and in the long run, the policy of striking in sympathy should be discouraged."

The other case referred to is that of the secondary boycott. It is quite true, as the unionists point out, that the boycott, in one form or another, is in almost universal use. The withdrawal of patronage from those whose conduct, for one reason or another, we disapprove, is not a thing unheard of. It is by no means uncommon for groups, professional or commercial, to express their dislikes after this manner. And there are few among us who are in a position to throw stones at a trade-union which refuses to patronize an employer with whom it is in controversy. The primary boycott is a

weapon which may be greatly abused and which a severe morality would be slow to commend, but in existing industrial conditions the unions cannot be severely censured for using it.

The secondary boycott is quite another story. The union may boycott the employer with whom it is at war, but when it proceeds to boycott all who will not boycott him, it is carrying its warfare beyond the limits of toleration. "To boycott a street railway which overworks its employees and pays starvation wages is one thing," says Mr. Mitchell; "to boycott merchants who ride in the cars is quite another thing, and to boycott people who patronize the stores of the merchants who ride in boycotted cars is still another and a very different thing." The dealer who can be coerced by such a threat is a man whose

friendship is not worth much to the union, and the enormous accumulation of ill will in the community, which such a practise always engenders, is a heavy price to pay for such advantages as it may secure. There is no gainsaying that the frequent resort to the secondary boycott is costing the unions much in the loss of friends whom they greatly need.

I have not mentioned all the charges which are made against unionism, but I have dealt, as I believe, with the most serious of them. It has been made to appear that unionism is subject to some serious abuses. I hope that it has also appeared that these abuses are not essential parts of the system, and that they are not incurable. Neither the petty restrictions upon work, nor the ban on prison labor, nor the lessening of the output,

nor the violence attendant upon labor struggles, nor the sympathetic strike, nor the secondary boycott can be counted as a necessary feature of unionism. All are perversions of its true functions, excrescences which may be purged away. No fair-minded man will condemn unionism because of them any more than he will denounce, because of their abuses, the Christian Church or the democratic state. "It would be a mistake," says that careful philosopher, Professor Charles Horton Cooley, "to regard these or any other kinds of injustice as a part of the essential policy of unions. They are feeling their way in a human, fallible manner, and their eventual policy will be determined by what in the way of class advancement they find by experience to be practicable. In so far as they attempt things that are unjust,

we may expect them, in the long run, to fail, through the resistance of others and through the awakening of their own consciences. It is the part of other people to check their excesses and to cherish their benefits." [1]

[1] *Social Organization*, pp. 288–289

II

THE REASON FOR THE UNIONS

II

THE REASON FOR THE UNIONS

I HAVE already dealt with the abuses of unionism. The exigencies of the argument seemed to call for this order of treatment, because most of those whom I wish to convince are aware of nothing but the abuses of unionism. If they can be made to see that these abuses are not essential to the institution, they may be willing to give heed to the reasons for its existence.

It may be supposed that the presentation of these reasons is a superfluous work. Nearly every employer whom you meet will tell you promptly, "I believe in trade-unions." There is a goodly number of those whose works

show that they do believe in them, and who are seeking to enter into cordial cooperation with them. Most employers, however, are apt to qualify their confession of faith by some such phrase as this: "When properly organized and managed." There seems to be something wanting in such a confession. Would a man say, "I believe in the family, when properly constituted and conducted," or "I believe in democracy, when properly organized and managed"? This seems to imply a reservation of our faith in the institution, if, in any case, fault can be found with its practical administration. Would it not be better to say concerning the family or concerning democracy: "I believe in it, and I hold myself bound to do my utmost to see that it is held in honor and that it is properly constituted and administered"? If such

were the attitude of all employers toward trade-unionism, we should soon see a vast improvement in the industrial situation. And I am quite sure that there are many employers who are now frankly antagonistic to the unions who would take this more friendly attitude toward them if they could clearly see what are the real purposes of the unions, and what disasters are involved in the proposition to kill or cripple them.[1]

Most of those who say that they believe in unions, "if properly conducted," mean to confine their approval to such unions as are purely social or beneficial. Trade-unions generally embody some such features, but they are not the central reasons for their existence. The Federal statute providing for the incorporation of trade-unions mentions these objects, but also speci-

[1] Appendix II.

fies, as purposes of such organizations, "the regulation of their wages and their hours and conditions of labor, the protection of their individual rights in the prosecution of their trade or trades." The trade-union has always had insurance features and social and educational features, and these are the features which the average employer is ready to indorse; but the main purpose for which they are organized is thus succinctly expressed by Mr. and Mrs. Webb: "To provide a continuous association of wage-earners, *for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their employment.*" This purpose the average employer does not approve of; when the union begins to exert its power in regulating wages or hours or conditions of labor, he thinks that it is getting out of its sphere and becoming a menace to the social wellbeing.

Here, now, is the crux of the situation. This is the main function of the trade-union — to organize and express the will of its members in bargaining about terms and conditions of labor. For one who disputes this right, to say that he believes in trade-unions is much like saying that he believes in watches provided they have no mainsprings, or in rivers so long as there is no water in them. No one can intelligently say that he approves of trade-unions unless he approves of giving to the men who are organized in them the right of dealing, through their representatives, on equal terms with their employers, concerning the wages they shall receive, the hours they shall labor, and the conditions under which their work shall be done.

There are employers who appear to say that they are willing to permit

trade-unions to negotiate about these matters, provided the unions will pledge themselves beforehand not to enforce their demands by striking. It does not appear, however, that these employers propose to divest themselves of the power to reduce wages, against the will of the men, or to dismiss whom they will without the consent of the union. They expect to keep for themselves all the power they now possess; all they ask is that before entering upon the struggle for the division of the joint product of capital and labor, the representatives of labor shall tie their own hands behind their backs. The proposition does not appear to be a very chivalrous one; probably while human nature remains as it is, and the competitive regime continues to prevail, it will not be widely accepted.

What, then, shall we say about this

demand of the unions — that they shall have the right, collectively, through their chosen representatives, to bargain with their employers about wages and conditions of labor? Is it a reasonable demand? I think that it is eminently reasonable and just; that no fair-minded employer ought for one moment to question it.

Let us remind ourselves that we are not dealing now with the old domestic system of industry, in which there were nearly as many men as masters, and the cases were rare in which the capitalist employer did not personally know all the people in his employ. Most of our industrial maxims are drawn out of that old régime, and have no application to the present order. Let us remember that we are dealing now with the large system of industry, in which a single responsible employer represents

hundreds or thousands of stockholders, and deals with hundreds or thousands of employees — a relation in which personal friendships and sympathies between employer and employee have come to be a negligible quantity. Suppose, now, that there is no organization among the laborers, or none that has any power to deal with questions of wages or hours of labor. The competitive régime is founded on the assumption that prices will be fixed by "the higgling of the market." How much "higgling of the market" is likely to take place between a single laborer and such a corporation? Let Sidney and Beatrice Webb set forth the details of the process. The case supposed is that of a labor market in perfect equilibrium.

"We assume that there is only a single situation vacant, and only one candidate for it. When the workman

applies for the post to the employer's foreman, the two parties differ considerably in strategic strength. There is first the difference of alternative. If the foreman, and the capitalist employer for whom he acts, fail to come to terms with the workman, they may be put to some inconvenience in arranging the work of the establishment. They may have to persuade the other workmen to work harder or to work overtime; they may even be compelled to leave a machine vacant, and thus run the risk of some delay in the completion of an order. Even if the workman remains obdurate, the worst that the capitalist suffers is a fractional decrease of the year's profit. Meanwhile he and his foreman, with their wives and families, find their housekeeping quite unaffected; they go on eating and drinking, working and enjoying them-

selves, whether the bargain with the individual workman has been made or not. Very different is the case with the wage-earner. If he refuses the foreman's terms even for a day, he irrevocably loses his whole day's subsistence. If he has absolutely no other resources than his labor, hunger brings him to his knees the very next morning. Even if he has a little hoard, or a couple of rooms full of furniture, he and his family can only exist by the immediate sacrifice of their cherished provision against calamity, or the stripping of their home. Sooner or later he must come to terms, on pain of starvation or the workhouse."[1] It is now universally agreed, Professor Marshall tells us, "that manual laborers as a class are at a disadvantage in bargaining." The

[1] *Industrial Democracy*, Part III, Chap. II. The entire chapter is most illuminating.

fact is so palpable that it is needless to quote authorities. A single laborer has no fighting chance in dealing with a great corporation; he can only accept what is offered him. The consequence is his inevitable degradation. Professor Marshall points out that "the effects of the laborer's disadvantage in bargaining are cumulative in two ways. It lowers his wages, and, as we have seen, this lowers his efficiency as a worker, and thereby lowers the normal value of his labor; and, in addition, it lowers his efficiency as a bargainer, and thus increases the chance that he will sell his labor for less than its normal value."

Under the present system of large industry, with competition as the regulative principle, unorganized labor is always driven on the downward road. This results, not only from the inequal-

ity between the single laborer and the great corporation, but also from the competition between employers. For the employer of humane and liberal sentiment, who wishes to pay his working people the highest wages possible, finds himself unable to compete with the unscrupulous employer, who, by forcing wages down, is able to produce goods cheaper than the former can, and thus to undersell him in the market and get his business away from him. Mr. John Graham Brooks quotes a retired shoe manufacturer of wealth who said of the trade-unions: "They make a good many stupid mistakes, but *an organization strong enough to fight the employer is a necessity to labor.* Competition so forces many of the best employers to copy the sharp tricks of the worst employers in lowering wages, that the trade-union must be equipped

to fight against these reductions or for a rise in wages when business is more prosperous."[1]

The fact that unorganized labor is steadily forced downward toward starvation and misery is a fact which no student of industrial conditions would dream of denying. The history of the industrial revolution by which the factory system supplanted the domestic system of production is full of examples of this process. Men who angrily declare that there shall be no organization of labor ought to read carefully the industrial history of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, when the conditions which they consider ideal were prevailing in the great industrial centers. There were no unions in England during the earlier part of this period; laws of the most drastic char-

[1] *The Social Unrest*, p 15.

acter, which made it a criminal conspiracy for two or three working men to consult together for the purpose of securing shorter hours or better wages, had effectually stamped out unionism.

For the employers it was a most prosperous period; wealth was increasing by leaps and bounds, great fortunes were being heaped up; but the chasm between the employer and the employed was steadily widening, and the condition of the working people was becoming more and more deplorable. "In the new cities," says Arnold Toynbee, "the old warm attachments, born of local contiguity and intercourse, vanished in the fierce contest for wealth among thousands who had never seen each other's faces before. Between the individual workmen and the capitalist who employed hundreds of 'hands' a wide gulf opened; the workman

ceased to be the cherished dependent; he became the living tool of whom the employer knew less than he did of his steam-engine."[1]

Government reports of this period show that children of five and six years of age were frequently employed in factories. Men and women stood at their daily tasks from twelve to fourteen and fifteen hours; a working day of sixteen hours was not an unheard-of thing. Even at that early day the demand was loud for machines that could be tended by women and children; and their husbands and fathers were driven out of the shops and compelled to stand idle in the market-place. "Nor was this unmeasured abuse of child labor," says Mr. Hyndman, "confined to the cotton, silk, or wool industries. It spread in every direction.

[1] *The Industrial Revolution*, p. 190.

The profit was so great that nothing could stop its development. The report of 1842 is crammed with statements as to the fearful overwork of girls and boys in iron and coal mines, which doubtless had been going on from the end of the eighteenth century. Children, being small and handy, were particularly convenient for small veins of coal, and for pits where no great amount of capital was embarked; they could get about where horses and mules could not. Little girls were forced to carry heavy buckets of coal up high ladders, and little girls and boys, instead of animals, dragged the coal-bunkers. Women were constantly employed underground at the filthiest tasks."[1]

Through all this period wages gravi-

[1] *Historic Basis of Socialism in England*, p. 166.

tated downward, and while the cost of food increased, the family income was steadily lowered. The Parliamentary reports give us pictures of the life of the people in all the great manufacturing centers that leave nothing for the imagination: "In the parishes of St. John and St. Margaret there lived in 1840, according to the *Journal of the Statistical Society*, 5,366 working men's families in 5294 'dwellings' (if they deserve the name!), men, women, and children thrown together without distinction of age or sex, 26,830 persons all told; and of these families three-fourths possessed but one room. In the aristocratic parish of St. George, Hanover Square, there lived, according to the same authority, 1465 working men's families, nearly six thousand persons, under similar conditions, and here, too, more than two-thirds of the whole

number crowded together at the rate of one family in one room."

"The preacher of the old church at Edinburgh, Dr. Lee, testified in 1836 before the Commission of Religious Instruction that he had never seen such misery in his parish, where the people were without furniture, without everything, two married couples often sharing one room. In a single day he had visited seven houses in which there was not a bed; in some of them not even a heap of straw. Old people of eighty years sleep on the board floor; nearly all slept in their day clothes. In one cellar room he found two families from a Scotch country district. Soon after their removal to the city two of the children had died, and a third was dying at the time of his visit. Each family had a filthy pile of straw lying in a corner, and the cellar sheltered, besides

the two families, a donkey, and was, moreover, so dark that it was impossible to distinguish one person from another by day. Dr. Lee declared that it was enough to make a heart of adamant bleed to see such misery in a country like Scotland." [1]

And these, be it remembered, were no days of industrial depression in Great Britain; they were flush times, booming times, when railways were building, and great mills were springing up on every hand, and hundreds of capitalist employers were building up great fortunes.

Such is the irresistible tendency of the large system of industry when labor is unorganized. It is helpless to resist the forces which press upon it from every side and doom it to degradation.

[1] *The Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844*, by Frederick Engels.

Our own country has witnessed comparatively little of this tendency, because until recently there has been abundance of cheap land to which the workers could betake themselves, and the physical development of a new country has absorbed our surplus labor. But even here the labor of women in the cities has given us some hints of the oppression to which unorganized labor is exposed; and such conditions as have lately been uncovered in Pittsburgh, where unionism has been practically exterminated, enable us to see what kind of fate is in reserve for any working class which fails to unite for its own protection.

What other possible barrier can be interposed between the working class and these forces of selfishness that always tend to exploit and degrade them? Shall the power of the State be called

in to protect them? The State may usefully interfere in behalf of children and women, and in the interest of public health, and for the safeguarding of the life of the laborer, and in some other ways; but so long as competition is the regulative principle of industry, the State can do very little to shield the laboring man from the pressure on his means of subsistence of the superincumbent mass of consolidated capital. Nor is it desirable that the State should take any class of its citizens under its special patronage.

It is often charged that the State has extended special privileges to capital, by which it has been able to exploit the laboring class; and also that it has failed to prevent illegal and oppressive conduct on the part of the strong, by which the weak have been plundered. All such wrongs the State is bound to

rectify; but when it has done all that it ought to do in these directions, it will still be possible for great combinations of organized capital to take advantage of unorganized labor and crowd it to the wall, and there is nothing that the State can do to prevent it.

It may be suggested that the sentiments of justice and humanity in the hearts of the capitalists themselves will prevent this oppression. Doubtless there are among them men of good will who would be moved by such considerations; but unfortunately, these are not the people who set the pace in these competitive struggles; and the unorganized laborers, instead of enjoying the protection of the best employers, soon find themselves at the mercy of the meanest.

But who wants to put them under anybody's protection or at anybody's

mercy? Who wants them to be coddled by the State or cockered by their employers? Are we going to put the millions of working people on the list of beneficiaries, and teach them to depend for their existence on the bounty of their employers? These are American citizens; they ought not to feel that they are living on this soil by anybody's sufferance; they ought not to be put, by our industrial system, in a position of vassalage, and they must not be. They ought to be men who have rights, and who "know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain." We cannot afford to have any other kind of citizens in this country. Some way must be found by which these men shall become, not only politically, but industrially free; by which they shall have something themselves to say respecting the terms and conditions of their

employment; by which they shall be assured that their standing in the community is not a matter of grace, but of right.

It is one of the bitter complaints against trade-unionists that they become insolent and arrogant in the use of their power. How much of that is a reaction from the abject servility to which anti-unionism tends to degrade them? I confess that nothing more disquieting has lately come to my knowledge than that state of mind in which we sometimes find American working men. In a late number of the *Technical World* Mr. P. Harvey Middleton thus describes his interview with a working man in the Carnegie works at Homestead. It was on a Sunday morning, and the man was just out of the mill. "He was asked if there had been any reduction of Sunday work since

the recent order about Sunday labor had been issued. 'Reduction be ——!' he ejaculated. 'Why, I haven't had a Sunday off in five years.' Then he suddenly became very serious, and, looking fearfully around the car (the steel workers have learned by bitter experience that the spies of the corporation are everywhere), bent down — he was over six feet — and whispered in my ear: 'This morning I skipped without saying a word to my boss. I don't know what will happen, and I have a wife and five kids at home. But I think I might have at least one half Sunday in five years, don't you?' This last an almost pathetic appeal. Here was an American citizen who had been working twelve hours a day, seven days (eighty-four hours) a week for five consecutive years. He was a laborer, and the Steel Trust paid him for his endless

toil sixteen and a half cents an hour. He wanted to spend the Sunday with his wife and children, but there was very little doubt in my mind that when he returned to work on Monday morning, he would be promptly discharged for quitting work without permission on the day of rest."

However that might have been, the shameful fact is that an American man should be afraid to complain of such conditions lest he should lose his livelihood. So also during this year of grace, in a town named Bethlehem(!), three machinists who dared to petition the manager of the steel works for the elimination of Sunday work were promptly discharged. As a consequence of this drastic policy, generally enforced where there are no unions, working men hardly dare to express a wish for better conditions. Mr. Robert

A. Woods, a most sober student of existing conditions, says that "the Pittsburgh employers' point of view, more than that of any other city in the country, is like that of England in the early days of the factory system — holding employees guilty of a sort of impiety, and acting with sudden and sure execution if they undertake to enforce their claims in such way as to embarrass the momentum of great business administration." This is the point of view which tends to prevail where unionism is excluded, and submission to it must produce a servile spirit in the laborer.

The street-car men in our Columbus strike have told me of the fear of consequences which oppressed them when, before their union was organized, they ventured to circulate a humble and perfectly respectful petition for a slight

increase of pay. That they had reason for such fear was made manifest when the company's inspectors warned them that they would be sorry if they did any such thing, and when those who were instrumental in circulating the petition were first reprimanded by the manager, and then, one by one, discharged.

I do not think that a wise statesmanship will consent to see the masses of American working men put in a position like this. Some way must be found by which they may keep their liberty and preserve their manhood.

By organizing themselves into unions they obtain and preserve this power. I know no other way under the present industrial system by which they can obtain it. I have never heard any other way suggested.

By this method they do maintain

their freedom and prevent the degradation to which, without organization, they are doomed. There is no question that, in the well-weighed words of John Mitchell, "trade-unionism has justified its existence by good works and high purposes. . . . It has elevated the standard of living of the American workman and conferred upon him higher wages and more leisure. It has increased efficiency, diminished accidents, averted disease, kept the children at school, raised the moral tone of the factories." Much of the legislation by which the conditions of the laboring classes have been improved is due to the initiative of the unions. Beyond all controversy, that frightful deterioration of the industrial classes which the large system of industry set in deadly operation has been arrested, and the lot of the laboring man has been vastly

improved during the last seventy-five years. No such horrible living conditions as those which I have described above can be found today in the great factory towns of Great Britain; even "the submerged tenth" are living far more decently now than the average mechanic was living then. Even Pittsburgh, in all its misery, is a paradise compared with Manchester and Glasgow in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century. Many causes have wrought together to produce this improvement, but the students of social science agree in their judgment that the most efficient cause of that improvement has been the organization of labor. It has enabled the working people to resist the pressure that would have degraded them, and to demand and secure a fairer share of the wealth which their labor produces.

It is true that not all working men have been included in the unions, but even those outside the organizations have largely shared in the gains that have been won by organized labor. When, in an open shop, the union succeeds in getting better wages or shorter hours, the non-union men get the benefit of the rise. The unorganized trades, like that of the sewing women, have, no doubt, often been exploited by their employers; but the general level of wages is undoubtedly kept up by the labor unions.

So great have been the benefits which unionism has brought to the laboring classes and to the community at large that a philosophic statesman like Professor Thorold Rogers, of Oxford, declared that if he had the making of the laws he would exclude from the franchise all workingmen who were not

members of trade-unions. Certain it is that the man who proposes to outlaw or exterminate them assumes a heavy responsibility.

III

INDUSTRY AND DEMOCRACY

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WHAT is commonly called the Labor Question is something more than a problem of economic organization; it deals with all that is most fundamental in the life of the commonwealth. It challenges the postulates of our political science; the answer to it involves the validity of the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence and the permanency of the Constitution of the United States. To answer it in one way means the surrender of popular government; to answer it in another way means the fulfilment and completion of democracy.

The great fact of the age is Democracy, the coronation of the common man. For the past hundred years he has been steadily coming to his own. Not only in the republics, the United States and France and Switzerland, not only in free England and her colonies, but in all the states described as monarchical, the enfranchisement of the common man has been going forward. The emperor of Germany, who declares that he rules by the will of God, nevertheless is compelled to ask the common man for the revenues by which he rules; even the czar of Russia and the sultan of Turkey have been compelled to stoop to him, and the lords of political privilege everywhere have discovered that there is no stability for the throne that is not "broad-based upon the people's will." Popular government is every-

where in the ascendant, and not only is government of the people, by the people, for the people, not going to perish from the earth, it is going to possess the earth, and that at no distant day. Monarchical forms may linger long, as in England, but the democratic fact will prevail everywhere as it prevails there.

In our own country we have given, in theory, the most unreserved expression to the principle of political democracy; the principle is yet but imperfectly worked out here, as everywhere, and we have much exacting business upon our hands in completing and developing our democratic institutions — work that will call for a great deal of patience and toil and self-denial; but we believe, most of us, in the principle; we have committed ourselves to it, and we expect, by

means of it, to unify the diverse races now thronging upon this continent and to make of them a strong, free, self-governing people.

But there is one department of our life, and this the largest interest of all, which has not been democratized. Our industries are still largely on an autocratic or feudalistic basis. We have been trying to correlate a political democracy with an industrial feudalism. They do not work well together. I do not think that they will endure together. They are antagonistic principles. The development of the large system of industry accentuates the antagonism. We may say what Lincoln said of slavery and freedom; the country will become eventually all democratic or all feudalistic. The working men will lose their political liberty, or they will gain their in-

dustrial liberty. I do not think that they will lose their votes; I think that they will gain their right to have a voice in determining what wages they shall receive and under what conditions they shall work.

Let me explain what I mean when I say that the basis of our present industry is feudalistic. I am speaking, of course, of the large system of industry under which the world's work is now mainly done, and I am assuming, also, that there is no organization of the laborers, since that is the condition which industrial feudalism holds up as the ideal and struggles to establish. Under this system the capitalist manager assumes the exclusive right to fix the rate of wages, the hours of labor, the conditions under which the work is done. He cannot, of course, discuss these matters with

each of his one thousand or ten thousand workmen; there can, therefore, be no semblance of a bargain in the case; it is an ultimatum; the employer presents it, the working man can take it or leave it. It would be absurd for a single laborer to propose to chaffer about wages or hours of labor with the American Steel Corporation or the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Out of these circumstances very naturally grows the assumption, on the part of the employer, that the right as well as the power to fix the laborer's wages belongs exclusively to him. When, therefore, any man or any body of men proposes to have something to say about it, he indignantly resents this proposal; he calls it interfering with his business. What he says to them is precisely this: "It is none of your business what

wages you shall receive; it is my business to tell you how much you can have, and I cannot permit any one to dictate to me about my business."

Of course the employer would say that the working man, or the group of working men, to whom he presents this ultimatum, can seek employment elsewhere; but he would also say, if he is morally consistent, that all other employers ought to treat workmen in the same way that he treats them; and if all do, then the working man's right to have something to say about the wages he shall receive is practically denied. Under such a regimen he becomes a beneficiary, a dependent; reversing Sir Henry Maine's phrase, he has gone back from contract to status; he is not a free man; he has sunk into servitude. This is what I

mean when I say that the basis of our present industry is feudalistic.

The working men found out, a good while ago, that the only possible way of preserving and enforcing their right of contract in the sale of their labor was by uniting together and insisting on collective bargaining with their employers. If the capitalist manager's one thousand or ten thousand employees unite in presenting their demands, they may succeed in getting some attention to them. By union and organization they may keep themselves from being reduced to a position of dependence and servitude, and may establish their right to a share in the wealth created by their labor and a voice in the distribution of the product of industry.

This means, of course, the recognition of a partnership of the men in

the business by which they earn their livelihood; their employer has invested his money in it, and they have invested their lives; they are entitled to such recognition. When this right is recognized, they are not any longer subjects; they are fellow-citizens and freemen; the common man has come to his own in the industrial realm; our democracy has completed itself.

Long ago we gave the common man the right to take part in making the laws of the State and the Nation and in choosing the men who should administer those laws; we let him say who shall be our presidents and our governors and our judges; but we have been afraid that it would never do to let him have anything to say about the wages he should receive or the hours he should work. I do not think that this fear is rational; at

any rate, the thing that he asks for is his right, and we have got to give him his right and teach him how to use it. And since, under the present industrial system, it is impossible for him to assert and maintain this right without organization, all who love justice and freedom ought to encourage him to organize, and stand by him and see that he gets the fruits of his organization.

There is no other way, I repeat, under the pressure of the stupendous combinations of capital, to rescue labor from degradation except by the firm organization of labor. There is no salvation for our democracy under the wage system but in this concerted resistance of the wage-workers. That they are prone to abuse their power has been fully admitted, and we all know how impossible are some of their

methods, and how needful it sometimes is to resist and defeat their aggressions. The acquisition of power by those who have long been deprived of it, is apt to be attended by outbreaks of wilfulness and arrogance. Patience and firmness will be needed in dealing with such cases. But as soon as we have made up our minds to be just, it will be easier to be patient and firm. We can stand up against other people's wrongs much more successfully when they know that we are ready to concede and maintain their rights. I do not expect to see lawlessness disappear from trade-unionism so long as there is so strong a disposition among employers to insist on making trade-unions outlaws. When workmen's right to combine for the protection of their interests is fully and frankly conceded, we shall, I

believe, soon see a great diminution of violence. At any rate, we shall then be in a position to deal with it, if it appears, sternly and effectively.

I do not, however, indulge the expectation that no mistakes will ever be made and no wrongs committed by working men after their right to combine is fully recognized. They are human, like the rest of us; and if they sometimes act foolishly and selfishly, those of us who never make any mistakes or do any mean things ourselves will be warranted in stoning them with stones.

The fact that they do sometimes act unreasonably and even brutally is constantly and passionately cited as a reason why they should not be permitted to combine. But I seem to remember to have somewhere heard it intimated that corporations have been

known to behave lawlessly and flagitiously. Shall we therefore have no corporations? If power is to be denied to all who abuse it, most of us will have to go powerless for the rest of our days. If those who have most abused it are to be the first to be deprived of it, then I say deliberately that there are ten reasons for prohibiting corporations where there is one for prohibiting trade-unions.

The power that men need to make them men must be given to them even though they may sometimes abuse it. That is the principle of democracy; and the time has come when the principle of democracy must be unreservedly accepted and unflinchingly applied to the organization of our industries. The common man, the working man, must be a freeman. He must not be required or permitted to

occupy a dependent or servile position in the industrial world.

It is well to get clearly before our minds the issue which confronts us. The question is whether we are ready to see our democracy complete itself. To that question the answer will not be unanimous. We have among us not a few lords of privilege who have been practising feudalism long enough to lose their faith in democracy. Men who mount to affluence in a decade or two are quite apt to acquire contempt for those who earn their daily bread by manual labor. Some of them have sense enough to conceal it, but there are many who blurt it out with no misgiving. "Mr. Worldly Wiseman," to whom Mr. Finley Dunne has introduced us in his *Interpreter's House*, is not an imaginary type; his cynicisms are but faithful reports of what

may be heard anywhere in the rich men's clubs and the smoking-rooms of the American liners. The people who think that popular government is a delusion, that our public school system is a curse, and that what we want is an American House of Lords to overawe and hold in check the insurgent democracy, may be met with here and there in the resorts frequented by the new rich. The funniest thing for many a moon is the spectacle of these people beating their breasts with alarm lest Theodore Roosevelt should make himself a king!

The existence of a considerable revolt against democracy in our American citizenship is a fact to be reckoned with. It is not a matter of wonder. Many of these people are living a life which in all its features is at war with the first principles of democracy. They

could hardly be expected to maintain their faith in a social theory which all their practise flouts.

There are many others whose lives are simpler, but who are beginning to shrink from the burdens which democracy imposes. Most of us have been inclined to assume that democracy was a sort of automatic device; given universal suffrage and free schools, and the machinery would run without much superintendence. It begins to be evident that this is a mistaken theory. Democracy is precisely the kind of government which requires of its citizens the largest amount of gratuitous service. We can have the best government in the world with such citizens as are now upon our soil; but only when men of intelligence and force face the responsibilities of citizenship, and give time

and toil and patience to the work of training and guiding the voters. Good government under any system is a costly product, and under a democracy the cost must be paid by the entire body of competent citizens. It is a war in which there is no discharge; the vigilance which is the price of liberty is not only eternal, it is universal.

Now, it is a melancholy fact that a good many of our well-to-do and not evil-minded citizens are getting tired of the responsibilities of democracy; they find that it is a strenuous business, and they would fain be rid of it. They would rather give their days to gain and their nights to pleasure than to shoulder the task of governing this republic. Some of them talk very pessimistically about the future of popular government, and even hint

now and then at the beneficence of a dictatorship. Such men are not likely to welcome the suggestion of the extension of democracy to the industrial realm. The existing feudalistic régime suits them better. They do not relish the task which would be thrust upon them by the democratization of our industries. They are right in thinking that it is a difficult task. Perhaps they deem it impossible. Before coming to that conclusion, however, it may be well for them to consider a few of the alternatives.

There are some difficulties, I believe, in maintaining the feudalistic régime. The employer who refuses to recognize the right of his men to have anything to say about wages or hours of labor does not always have an easy and quiet time of it. Troubles of a pretty serious nature do arise,

even under such management. Are not the frictions and collisions and losses of the autocratic régime quite as injurious as any that would be likely to arise under a more friendly arrangement?

The man who thinks it would be difficult to lead his employees in the peaceful paths of productive industry may well consider whether it is any easier to drive them. He may even find it profitable to consult his own experience in answering that question.

It is prudent, also, to remember that we are dealing here with one of those secular forces against which it is futile to contend. If anything is clearly written in the book of destiny, so far as its pages have thus far been turned over, it is that democracy is going to complete itself. That process has been moving steadily forward

during the past century, and it is not likely to be arrested. Feudalism has made its last stand in the industrial realm, but it is not probable that it can hold that fortress. The prevalence of the large system of industry will not be suffered to degrade our wage-workers to the condition of serfs. There has never been a day when such a result was less probable than it is today. If the employing class should put itself in opposition to this movement for the emancipation of the working class, the employing class would cease to exist; the wage system would be destroyed; industry would be reorganized on a new basis.

It is well, therefore, for our captains of industry to consider carefully what may be involved in their refusal to recognize or tolerate the only method by which the working man can assert

and maintain his rights. It is a perilous thing, as history shows, to deny the manhood of the common man. Kingdoms and thrones have been shaken by that refusal; the kingdom of capitalism is by no means secure against such an overturning. The danger of the hour, as it appears to me, is that our captains of industry will array against themselves the gathering might of resistless democracy and be trampled in the dust. It would be far better for them, and for the common man, and for all the rest of us, if they would keep the leadership of industry. Leadership they can have, if they have sense to claim it and wit to exercise it — leadership, but not lordship. Industrial democracy wants leaders, but not autocrats; and large rewards and precious — not billions of dollars, but blessing and

honor — are waiting for those who have the vision and the courage for this high service.

Industrial democracy means giving the wage-workers, through collective bargaining, a voice in the determination of their share in the joint product. It does not mean the domination of the business by the men and the subjugation of the employer, though this is the employer's apprehension, and this is the notion that sometimes gets into the working man's head. Mr. Keir Hardie, M.P., for whom I have great respect, spoke only the other day of the prospect that the working class was about to become the ruling class. Pardon, Mr. Hardie, but in democracy there are no ruling classes. We call no man master, not even the walking delegate. And inverted feudalism, with the common man on

top, would be no whit better than the old-fashioned sort with the common man under foot. We will have neither of them. You are not going to tyrannize over us, Mr. Keir Hardie, with your labor organizations, and we do not believe that you really want to do any such thing. You are going to stand by our side, with power in the industrial realm to assert and maintain your rights as men, and with a sense of justice in your breasts which will enable you fully to recognize the rights of your capitalist employer; and we are going to work together, all classes — men of capital, men of organizing talent, men of skill, men of brains, and men of brawn — to build a real commonwealth.

So shall we realize our democracy. It has never been anything more than the skeleton of a democracy; so long

as industry is feudalistic it cannot be. But when the common man is emancipated and called into partnership by the captain of industry, we shall have a real democracy. No superhuman vision is needed to discern the fact that the confusions and corruptions of our political democracy are largely due to the disorganizing influence of this industrial feudalism, in constant contact with it, and continually thrusting its alien conceptions and ideals into the political arena. When industry is fairly democratized, it will be much easier to reform our politics.

The relinquishment of autocratic power is not apt to be a welcome suggestion; the cases are few in which it is surrendered without a deadly struggle. But within the last generation we have seen the feudal rulers of Japan resigning their power and

entering heartily into the life of the commonwealth, with great honor to themselves and great profit to their nation. It is not incredible that many of our own captains of industry will discern the wisdom of a similar sacrifice. Indeed, there are those among them to whom this solution of the labor problem seems altogether feasible.

The late William Henry Baldwin, Jr., whose biography has been so admirably written by Mr. John Graham Brooks,[1] was a type of the class of employers to whom the democratization of industry is the way of life and peace. As a railway superintendent and president he had large experience in dealing with men, and all the positions taken in this chapter were held by him with the utmost firmness. In the book to

[1] *An American Citizen.* By J. G. Brooks. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

which I have referred, and which ought to be read by every American employer, these opinions of his are set forth with great fulness. Speaking of the extension of collective bargaining, he says: "The advantages of this system are very obvious in that it is a system founded on an intelligent treatment of each question at issue, and *encourages education*, and, as far as we can see today, is the most advanced method and liable to produce the best results. Collective bargaining and voluntary arbitration are possible, however, *only when the employer recognizes the right of the employed to have a voice in the fixing of wages and terms of employment.*"

"In the spirit of fair play," says Mr. Brooks, "he asks the simplest question: 'If these billions of capital have to be organized to protect them-

selves against disputing rivalries, do not the laborers working for these organizations have the same need of combination? Do they not need it for the same reason? Is capital exposed to cutthroat competition in any greater degree than labor is exposed to it? How can capital have the face to ask for combination, in order to free itself from a murderous competition, when labor suffers every whit as much from the same cause?' I have heard Baldwin," his biographer goes on, "very eloquent on this subject. The deepest thing in him was his sense of justice. He felt it like an insult that the more powerful party should stoop to ask such odds against the weaker and more defenseless party." "'We men at the top,' says Baldwin, 'must have combination, we must have our representatives and

"walking delegates." We have everything that powerful organization can ask, with the ablest lawyers to do our bidding. Labor, to protect its rights and standards, needs organization, at least as much as we need it. For capital to use its strength and skill to take this weapon from the working men and women is an outrage.'" And again: "'I need, as an employer, an organization among my employees, because they know their needs better than I can know them, *and they are therefore the safeguard upon which I must depend in order to prevent me from doing them an injustice.*'"

This is getting right at the nerve of the whole matter. No wiser, braver, saner words were ever spoken. The labor question will be speedily settled when such a spirit of justice and fair play, such a recognition of the elemen-

tal rights of manhood, gets possession of the hearts of employers. Of the habit of mind which cannot concede so much as this, one can say nothing better than that it is unsportsmanlike. We give even the wild creatures a chance for their lives; and so long as the industrial struggle continues, the chivalrous employer will not insist that his employees shall go into the contest with their hands tied behind them.

Beyond this question of personal honor between employer and employee is one that touches very deeply the foundations of our social structure "If capital refuses to labor what capital asks and takes for itself, what are the final consequences of that injustice? How, in the long run, is labor to take this defeat of what it believes to be its rights? Those cap-

italist managers, really hostile to the unions, said to him in excuse that the unions checked and hindered the development of business prosperity. Baldwin had his answer: 'Even if that is true, it is better to get rich at a somewhat slower pace than to make millions of wage-earners lose faith in your justice and fairness.'"

Is it too much to expect that our captains of industry will give sober heed to words like these, spoken by one of their own number?

It is not, however, necessary to assume that the democratization of industry will prove any serious obstruction to the healthy growth of business. If the trade-unions have often shown themselves to be tyrannical and greedy, we must remember that they have been fighting, thus far, in an arena where belligerent rights were denied

them; it is not to be wondered at that they have sometimes taken unfair advantages. When their rights are fully recognized, better conduct may be looked for. So long as they are treated as enemies it is not logical to ask them to behave as friends.

It would be interesting to study the origins of those trade-unions which have made trouble for employers. The cases are not all alike, but in many instances something like this has happened: some dissatisfaction on the part of the men has shown itself, and it becomes known to the employer that steps are being taken for the organization of a union. At once his displeasure is manifested. He feels that the action is hostile to his interest; his entire attitude toward it is unfriendly from the start. It becomes well understood among the men that

those who join the union are exposing themselves to the ill will of the employer; that those who refuse to join may expect his favor. Thus the interests of the men are divided, and the non-unionist contingent is fostered by the manager as a force to check and defeat the unionists in the event of a struggle. Under such circumstances bad temper is generated on both sides, and the relations of all parties are badly strained. The manager refuses to recognize the union; that, he insists, would be an injustice to the loyal men who have refused to join it. If a union with such a history should prove to be a disturbing and refractory element in the business, it would not be a miracle.

Suppose, now, that when the first signs of an uprising among the men appear, the employer, instead of treat-

ing it with suspicion or hostility, welcomes it. Suppose that he goes out among the men and says to them, what Baldwin would have said: "Certainly, men, you must organize. I mean to treat you fairly, but I do not want you to be dependent on my favor; I insist that you shall have the power to stand for your own rights. And I want all the men in this shop to join this union. No man will curry favor with me by staying out of it. I am going to be friends with the union, and I expect the union to be my friend. This is not my business, not your business, it is our business. I shall study your interest and you will study mine; we will consult together about it all the while; I think we can make it go together. If you ask me for what I cannot give, I shall tell you so. And I hope you

will learn to believe that I am telling you the truth. I shall stand for my rights if you are mean and unreasonable, and you will stand for yours if you think I am unjust, but if we must fight we stand on the level and fight fair. I hope that there will be no fighting."

Now, it is possible that a group of American working men could be found who would make trouble for an employer who took that attitude and consistently maintained it, but I do not believe that there are many such groups. It would be visionary to expect that any method which man could devise would wholly remove friction and discontent, and a strong and firm hand would often be needed in carrying out such a purpose as this, but one may confidently predict that peace and prosperity are made nearer

by this approach than on the lines of industrial feudalism.[1]

It will be observed also that such a line of policy eliminates the question of the closed shop. If the employer wishes all his employees to belong to the union, and makes it clear that union men are favored, the reason for a closed shop practically disappears. The employer's reason for an open shop is his need of a force near at hand to fight the union; when he makes the union his ally instead of his enemy, non-unionism becomes both to him and to his men a negligible quantity.

The man who takes up a purpose of this kind, whether he is proprietor or general manager, cannot be guaranteed an easy job. It will not be possible for him to turn it over

[1] Appendix III.

to subordinates; he will have to keep close to it himself. It will call for labor, for self-control, for faith in men, for all the best qualities of mind and heart. Neither in the State nor in the factory will our democracy be fulfilled wihout patient, heroic, self-denying work. But the work will be rewarding. Can any compensation be higher or finer than that of the man who wins, as Baldwin won, the loyal affection of scores or hundreds or thousands of men; who helps them to stand on their own feet and work out their own fortunes; who makes them see that the industry by which they gain their livelihood is one in which they have a real stake, so that they are not merely dependents on it, but, in a true sense, partners in it; who sees growing up around him a community of friendly men with some

sense of the dignities of manhood and the responsibilities of citizenship? No vocation can be more sacred than this, and no reward more satisfying.

IV

CROSS-LIGHTS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS

IV

CROSS-LIGHTS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS

IN this chapter I wish to deal with a variety of conflicting phases and aspects of the labor question in which partial notions are involved and by which misleading judgments are given currency. In any conflict of ideas or policies the partisans on either side are apt to discern with great clearness the evil consequences which would follow if the policy of their antagonists were carried to extremes, and to assume that this is what is likely to happen. Neither party, however, is likely to follow its own policies to extreme conclusions, or is willing to admit that

such a thing is possible. Each party sees the best possibilities in its own program and the worst in that of its opponents. It would be well to reverse this method now and then; we should get a better perspective.

The employers who are fighting the unions have before their minds vivid pictures of the confusion and ruin which would ensue if the cause of unionism should prevail. If all the industries were unionized, and if the worst practises of the unions should become universal, the injury to business, say the employers, would be deadly. With such power to enforce their demands, the tyranny of the unions would become intolerable. The capitalist employer would lose all control of his business; rules would be made which would cripple production; no manufacturer could be certain, if he made a

contract, that he would be able to keep it; profits would be so reduced by the constantly rising rate of wages that there would be no adequate reward for business enterprise; the value of costly buildings and machinery would be constantly depreciated; the cost of production would be so enhanced that prices would rise to a point at which consumption would be curtailed, and this, in turn, would check production; from industries under this ban capital would be withdrawn as rapidly as possible, and the communities thus afflicted would be depopulated.

This is a picture which the anti-unionist is fond of drawing. It is generally overdrawn; but it is well for the unionist to take a good look at it. There is in it enough verisimilitude to give him food for serious thought. It may suggest to him that if he should

have his way about everything, he might produce a condition of things in which it would not be possible for him to live. That is not a rare achievement. The ancient sport of killing the goose that lays the golden egg has many votaries in modern times.

There is no question but that unions have sometimes carried their exactions so far as to cripple industries and paralyze the growth of communities. Instances are constantly cited by anti-unionists; I will not mention them, but credible reports warrant the belief that in several American communities unionism has become a public injury; by its greedy aggressions it has destroyed the enterprises it undertook to regulate, and proved itself to be an unsocial force. It is well for all unionists to keep these possibilities steadily before their minds.

There is another picture, however, which intelligent unionists are more in the habit of contemplating. That is the picture of the industrial community in modern times from which unionism has been forcibly excluded. We have had glimpses of these conditions in a previous article, and they are not reassuring. What happened in England in the second quarter of the nineteenth century is sure to happen anywhere, under the large system of industry, if the working classes fail to unite for their own protection. Greed is as merciless as the grave and as blind as fate; it overrides and tramples on all humane considerations; it makes the bodies and souls of men its prey. The fate of the working class, unorganized, in contact with the great aggregations of capital, is not an obscure augury. The pressure of competition forces the

labor market downward; the cost of production must be reduced at every point, and labor, unorganized, furnishes the line of least resistance. Benevolent wishes on the part of conscientious individual employers count for little. "What would you do?" is the employer's confident demand. "What right have I to raise wages? Here are hundreds of men knocking at my gates who are willing to do my work for what I am now paying, or even for less. They need the work. Why should I not give it to them? Is there any better regulator of wages than the law of supply and demand?" Such reasoning steadily and fatally lessens the wage and lengthens the working day, till you find unorganized laborers even today, in the biggest corporations that the world has ever seen, working twelve hours a day and seven days in a week

for a compensation that barely keeps body and soul together.

It is palpable, of course, that such a policy must result in the deterioration of the working force. The standard of living goes down and the efficiency of labor goes down with it, so that it is not long before the low wages buy less work than the high wages bought, and the cost of production is greater than it was with the well-paid labor. What is more, the great mass of the consumers are wage-workers, and when their compensation is cut down, they have less to spend and the demand for the products of labor is reduced and trade stagnates and orders fall off at the mills and the factories and the wheels stop and the starving laborers stand idle in the market-place because no man will hire them.

In communities as intelligent as ours

such conditions breed discontent, which bodes ill to the peace of the State. So long as working men have reason to believe that they may be able to maintain their rights by combination, they are apt to give a wide berth to revolutionary agitators; but when it becomes evident that this resource is failing them, the propagandists of a new order find them accessible. I have heard many bitter words spoken during the last summer in my own city, not by strikers, but by working men, who saw in the concerted and determined efforts made by the power-holding classes to crush the strike, the evidence that no resource was left to them but social revolution. The strike was crushed in October, and the Socialist vote in November was increased one thousand per cent.

Now, this is the panorama on which

the employing classes may usefully fasten their gaze. They can see very distinctly what is likely to happen if unionism prevails and the unsocial tendencies of the unions are triumphant; they do not, as a rule, give any careful attention to the consequences which are sure to flow from the triumph of their own program. Indeed, they are quite as blind to these issues as the unions are to the industrial paralysis which their own aggressions are threatening. The feudalism which they seek to establish would bring lean economic returns; the path to prosperity is not through the degradation of labor. Considering their own interests, their policy is just as suicidal as that of the aggressive labor unions. Nothing worse could happen to them than to succeed in their efforts to abolish the unions.

It would be a calamity to the State

if either of these contending policies should win a complete victory. The subjugation of labor by capital or of capital by labor would mean, of course, the downfall of the present industrial order and an industrial revolution much more sweeping than any that has yet occurred in history. Such an overturning would be an unspeakable disaster. That a healthy evolution will carry us in the direction of the collective ownership of capital is altogether probable; but precipitation into that régime, with our present moral and social outfit, would result in terrible losses to civilization. It is, above all things, needful that we make haste slowly in that direction, and the kind of industrial democracy which is furnished by the frank recognition of organized labor and friendly cooperation with it affords to both classes just the kind of

education which is needed to prepare us for those larger cooperations which are, no doubt, in store for us. Along that road we may go peacefully and prosperously toward the industrial commonwealth of the future. If that road is blocked, the path leads over a precipice.

What is needed, therefore, is a serious consideration by each of these contending parties of the consequences which are likely to follow from pushing its own policy to extremes, and a resolute purpose to guard against those excesses. No unionist is in a position to demand the recognition of his union till he has pruned it of those harsh features which naturally exasperate the employer; till it has shown that it has no use for violence or lawlessness; that it does not mean to embarrass production by petty restrictions; that it intends to keep all

its contracts to the letter, to maintain high standards of fidelity and efficiency, and to give a fair day's work for a fair day's wages. Unions which maintain such a character as this will find it less difficult to obtain recognition.

On the other hand, no employer is in a position to demand that his men shall maintain this high standard of industrial ethics so long as he denies to them the primary right of uniting for the protection of their own interests, and insists on treating such unions as outlaws and enemies. The injustice of this act is so flagrant that he has no right to complain of any misconduct on the part of his men. And no gratuities or benevolences that he may practise toward them will atone for this denial of their rights. When their rights are fully recognized and he is ready to meet

them on such a platform of equality as collective bargaining provides, he will find them much less disposed to resort to those extreme measures of which he now complains.

I come now to speak of one or two matters which may seem of slight importance, but which deserve some serious attention.

Not a little mischief is done by the indulgence of undiscriminating and intemperate speech on both sides of this controversy. The labor press often makes use of very ungentle terms in describing the acts and judging the motives of the employing class. Some of the employers deserve these hot words, but not all of them; there are many among them who are sincerely desirous of finding a just solution of all these problems. Sweeping denunciations of the capitalist class are not only

unfair, they are highly impolitic. They tend to alienate friends whose support would be valuable to the cause of unionism.

On the other hand, I hear from men whose intellectual opportunities should have taught them more temperate habits of speech, judgments upon the entire laboring class which are astonishingly unjust. One who knows the working people of the United States — those of foreign birth as well as those who were born upon our soil — listens with surprise and pain to what is said about them by many who do not know them at all. Certainly they are not all saints or angels; doubtless many of them are not so wise or good as we could wish them to be; but the kind of speech which we are accustomed to hear about them is fearfully unjust. I hear men talk as though there were

no fidelity or honor or honesty among American working men — as if they were all shirks and malingerers and eye-servants; as though they had no other motive than to get the largest possible stipend for the least possible service. Especially true are these harsh judgments assumed to be of trade-unionists; of them it is not possible for some Christian people to believe anything good.

It is a pity that those who harbor such hard feelings could not get better acquainted with their neighbors. I am sure that they would find among these working people — even among trade-unionists — a goodly number of honest, faithful, fair-minded men and women. It would be a sorry thing for this Nation if the great mass of its citizens were as lacking in the sound elements of character as many of these

wholesale judgments assume that they are. For my part, I do not find them so. I believe that, take them all in all, they are as trustworthy and reasonable and honorable and kind-hearted as are the more cultured and prosperous classes. The hope of the Nation lies, I believe, in the essential worthiness of these wage-workers. Something is the matter with the patriotism of the man who maligns them. And the man who can see but little good in them ought not to have any dealings with them. His intercourse with them can bring nothing but harm to him and to them. He is not fit for any responsible place in the kingdom of industry, and will not be until he gets a new heart.

Another subject on which there is need of some revision of judgment is the "walking delegate," or business agent, as he is now generally named.

The almost universal impression among the employing classes seems to be that these representatives of the unions are, as a rule, depraved persons with criminal antecedents and none but sinister purposes. This judgment is formed, in most cases, on very slight acquaintance. Again I must protest that I have not found this judgment just.

There are historic instances of thoroughly bad men obtaining and holding the leadership of labor unions. But the same thing has been true of churches, and the people sometimes choose bad men to rule our cities and to represent them in Congress. I am not sure that the unions are not as successful in the choice of leaders as are the religious and the political organizations. In the great majority of cases it will be found, I think, that the representatives of the unions are clean, fair-

minded, upright men. Nor is it true that most labor disputes are due to their instigation. Employers are apt to charge all disaffection among their employees to the influence of "walking delegates," but this is by no means the rule. The trouble generally begins before any labor leader is called in, and the influence of these leaders in the adjustment of such difficulties is apt to be conservative. The worst strike I have known in Ohio was voted by the men against the strenuous protest of their leader. Only the other day in Chicago the business agent of the garment-makers arranged a settlement with the employers which the union itself violently repudiated, driving their agent from the hall. The habitual refusal of employers to have any dealings with accredited representatives of the unions is not only unjust, it is extremely

unwise. Those employers who have received these representatives and have entered into amicable relations with them have generally found them intelligent and reasonable. One employer in Ohio, after spending half a million dollars in fighting against the recognition of the union, changed his mind and entered into a labor agreement with the union through its representatives. After two or three years of this experience he told me that everything was going well at the mine. "In fact," he said, "it is far easier dealing with an intelligent and responsible man than with a mob." If employers generally could get rid of some of their superstitions about "walking delegates" and could meet them man-fashion, they might often find it greatly to their advantage.

The question of the open or closed

shop is one around which just now the battle rages. As was said in a previous chapter, this question is practically eliminated by the determination of the employer to give full recognition to the union and to let it be known that he desires all his workmen to belong to it. Under such conditions it is not probable that enough men would remain outside to cause any trouble. If it is the employer's policy, not to fight the union, but to establish living and cooperative relations with it, he will have no more use for non-unionists than the union itself has, and it is not likely that non-unionism would thrive in that atmosphere. If the contention of these chapters is valid, this is the only attitude toward the union which can be taken by a right-minded employer, and it effectually disposes of the question of the closed shop. If, on the other hand,

the employer wishes to maintain an unfriendly attitude toward the union, and to put as many obstacles as he can in the way of the organization of his men, of course he will stand for the open shop and use his influence to keep the non-union contingent as large as possible, that he may have a strong force at hand to fight the union when a strike occurs. This creates a situation which is nearly impossible, and justifies the men in demanding a closed shop.

I see no reason why the kind of agreement entered into last September between the Manufacturers' Association of New York and the Garment Workers' Unions of that city might not be widely adopted. After a definite fixing of the hours of work and the rates of compensation in all the shops concerned, this agreement follows:

"Each member of the Manufacturers

[Association] is to maintain a union shop; a 'union shop' being understood to refer to a shop where union standards as to working conditions, hours of labor, and rates of wages as herein provided prevail, and where, when hiring help, union men are preferred; it being recognized that, since there are differences in degrees of skill among those employed in the trade, employers shall have freedom of selection as between one union man and another, and shall not be confined to any list, nor bound to follow any prescribed agreement whatever. It is further understood that all existing agreements and obligations of the employer, including those to present employees, shall be respected; *the Manufacturers, however, declare their belief in the union, and that all who desire its benefits should share in its burdens.*"

This seems a most liberal and reason-

able contract, fair and honorable alike to employers and employed. What the employers say, in the phrases italicized above, is a notable confession of faith and a cogent statement of industrial morals. When all employers are ready to put their hands to such a declaration, the labor question will be well advanced toward a solution.

If what these employers say is true, it must be admitted that the non-unionist is not left in an exalted position. There has been a tendency in certain quarters to make him a hero, but, if the reasoning of these articles is sound, this is rather more than is due him. He is one who insists on enjoying the benefits of labor organization without sharing its burdens. That is something less than heroic.

My own mind is clear upon the proposition that if I were a wage-

worker in any trade I should feel under obligation to join the trade-union. It is so entirely plain to me that the freedom of the working class can be maintained in these days only by firm organization that I could not get the consent of my conscience to stay outside the union. And I am equally sure that I could not feel any very enthusiastic admiration for men of my own trade who refused to join the union and did what they could to defeat its purposes. I trust that I should be able to refrain from applying to them opprobrious epithets and from assailing them with brickbats, but I should not be able to hold them in high honor.

One of the strongest of recent writers on political science, Mr. Herbert Croly, bears this testimony:

"The labor unions deserve to be

favored because they are the most effective machinery which has as yet been forged for the economic and social amelioration of the laboring class. They have helped to raise the standard of living, to mitigate the rigors of competition among individual laborers, and in this way to secure for labor a larger share of the industrial product. A democratic government has little or less reason to interfere on behalf of the non-union laborer than it has to interfere on behalf of the small producer. As a type the non-union laborer is a species of industrial derelict. He is the laborer who has gone astray, and who, either from apathy, unintelligence, incompetence, or some immediately pressing need, prefers his own individual interest to the joint interests of himself and his fellow-laborers. . . . From any comprehensive point of view, union,

and not non-union, labor represents the independence of the laborer, because, under existing circumstances, such independence must be brought by association." [1]

The joint agreement between the garment workers and their employers, from which I have already quoted, contains also a definite provision for the arbitration of all differences arising between the two parties, who bind themselves to abide by the decision of the arbitrators; also stipulating that if any dispute shall arise, "the parties to this protocol agree that there shall be no strike or lockout concerning such matters in controversy until full opportunity shall have been given for the submission of such matters to said Board of Arbitration, and, in the event

[1] *The Promise of American Life*, pp. 387–388.

of a determination of such controversies by said Board of Arbitration, only in the event of a failure to accede to the determination of said Board." All disputes are to be arbitrated and a Board of Arbitration appointed; no strikes nor lockouts are to be allowed until the decision has been rendered, and then only in case one of the parties breaks its contract and refuses to abide by the decision.

Is not such a provision for the peaceful settlement of disputes possible in any industry? Is any man's dignity or honor compromised by entering into such a compact? Would it not save both for capital and for labor millions of dollars every year, and put an end to the industrial warfare which embitters our lives and threatens our liberties?

The civilized world is rapidly coming

to the conviction that all international disputes may, and must, be settled by arbitration. In view of that fact, it seems absurd to contend that there are any industrial disputes which cannot be settled in the same way. The demand is loud from a long-suffering community that industrial war shall cease. The day is near when the combatant in this arena who has "nothing to arbitrate" will be recognized as an enemy of society.

Especially true is this of labor disputes in public service companies. It is about time that the managers of such companies were made to understand that the people do not put franchises into their hands to be used as weapons of war. In all these industries in which the State or the city is a partner, the State or the city is bound to keep the peace. No franchise ought to be

granted to a public service company which does not contain explicit and stringent provisions requiring the submission to arbitration of all disputes arising between the managers and the men. It ought to be made a misdemeanor for the men to strike until the question has been fully arbitrated; and the refusal of the company to arbitrate or to abide by the decision of the arbitrators ought to result in the forfeiture of its charter.[1]

This raises the serious question as to the regulation by the State or the Nation of industrial organizations. We are undertaking, in some rather drastic ways, to regulate corporations; there seems to be equal reason why we should take trade-unions in hand and, while giving them explicit recognition, establish certain definite principles to

[1] See Appendix IV.

which, in their organization and operation, they must conform. It seems inconceivable that an interest so vast as this, affecting the public welfare in so many ways, should be allowed to shape its own policies and choose its own ends with no efficient direction by the commonwealth. I am not clear about the incorporation of the unions, but I am sure that the Nation must find some way of defining their powers and privileges, and giving them a rightful and honorable place in the National life. Precisely how this is to be done I will not undertake, at the present moment, to point out. I am only sure that our lawmakers have some very important constructive work to do in the organization of our industries, and that they cannot get about it too soon.[1]

[1] See *The Promise of American Life*, by Herbert Croly, Chapter XII.

V

THE CHURCH AND THE LABOR QUESTION

V

THE CHURCH AND THE LABOR QUESTION

WHAT business has the Church with the Labor Question? Is it not an economic question? What right has the Church to meddle with matters purely secular? Why does she not confine herself to spiritual interests, and find her function in inspiring men with right conceptions and pure motives, leaving them to make their own application of the principles she teaches to the affairs of life? Is there not danger that the Church will make grave mistakes if she undertakes to deal with these difficult problems of modern industrial

organization? Would it not be better for the Church to adhere to her own proper function of saving souls and comforting sorrows and fitting men for heaven? Do we want these disturbing questions of the labor market brought into the sanctuary? Must it not have a tendency to irritate many hearers and drive them away from the churches?

Questions of this tenor are often heard, even in this generation; and the attitude of mind which these questions imply is the prevailing attitude in a great many of our more influential churches. It seems, therefore, to be necessary, at the close of the first decade of the twentieth century, to give some heed to such scruples.

It ought not to be necessary to say that they arise out of a conception of human life which is not any

longer entertained by thoughtful men — namely, that it is divided into two non-communicating hemispheres — the sacred and the secular; religion being an interest by itself, with motives, principles, and laws of its own, and the rest of life being under the control of ideas and forces with which religion has nothing to do. Some such conception as this prevailed in evangelical circles fifty years ago; when Mr. Beecher began to preach the doctrine that all life is sacred, the idea came with a shock to most "professors of religion." Of course this notion was taught with varying emphasis; there were many to whom the close correspondence between faith and conduct was evident, but the tendency to keep morals and religion in separate compartments was very strong within the memory of some who are now alive. The recently pub-

lished confessions of Uncle Daniel Drew refresh our memory with forms of speech which were once familiar, and set before us a habit of thought about religion which was prevalent not very long ago. When Uncle Daniel tells us about the way he spent his Sundays during his exile in Jersey City when he was engaged in one of the colossal robberies by which he won distinction — how he needed in those exciting days the comfort which only the sanctuary could give, and how he felt that he, as the "only Christian" among those bold buccaneers, must set them a good example by piously attending church — we get a vivid illustration of the state of mind to which I have referred. And when, a little later in the story, the same eminent saint mentions a sermon, which he had lately heard, on making

the Lord a partner in your business, and deplores the fact that we have so much of that kind of preaching nowadays, we discern the same mental attitude as that which finds expression in the questions we are considering.

Briefly, then, we may say that the labor question is in part an economic question, and that all economic questions are fundamentally religious questions; that there are no purely spiritual interests, since the spiritual forces all incarnate themselves in the facts of every-day life, and can only be known as they are there manifested; that there is indeed danger that the Church will make mistakes in dealing with such questions, but that the greatest of all her mistakes is in ignoring them; that there are no souls that more need saving than the souls that are getting entangled in the materialisms that

undervalue manhood; and that there are no people who need moral guidance more than those who are grappling with the manifold phases of the labor question. That some of them resent the truth about this matter is a sad fact, but that is not a good reason for suppressing the truth; and there must be many among them who are ready to know the truth and from whom it would be a crime to conceal it. While, therefore, the preacher knows that to some of his hearers the truth, no matter how wisely and kindly spoken, will be "a savor of death unto death," it is his business to tell the truth for the sake of those to whom it will be "a savor of life unto life."[1]

It is sometimes said that the Church cannot deal in any explicit and concrete fashion with these labor prob-

[1] See Appendix V.

lems; that the utmost she can do is to enunciate ethical principles; that she must not venture to apply them. But if Scriptural examples are of any validity, it is clear that Amos and Hosea and Micah and Isaiah and Jeremiah knew how to apply principles to concrete cases. All these Hebrew prophets deal in the most direct and explicit manner with the social injustices then prevailing. They did not content themselves with enunciating ethical principles, they made the application in the most pungent fashion. "Forasmuch therefore," cries Amos, "as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. For I know your manifold transgressions

and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right." "Woe unto them," echoes Micah, "that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." It is hardly too much to say that the burden of these Hebrew prophets was the social inequality of their time, and that it was in their struggle against the oppression of the weak by the strong that they came to their clear consciousness of a righteous God. Doubtless these were disturbing messages; doubtless many of the well-to-do were alienated from the Church by

this trenchant testimony; but it was spoken, nevertheless, and it remains to the world an imperishable legacy.

Much of Christ's preaching on social topics has no lack of definiteness, and the concluding chapters of most of the Epistles would be suggestive reading for those who think that the Church must avoid the application of Christian principles to actual human conditions. James, the brother of our Lord, may be supposed to be familiar with our Lord's point of view. His words recall the old prophets: "Go to, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of the

laborers who have mowed your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one: he doth not resist you." If we faithfully expound the Scripture, we shall surely be compelled to do a good deal of preaching of a very direct and concrete sort on the labor question.

It will be admitted that the chief interest of the Church is in character. Its business in the world is primarily the production of good character, the building up of sound, clean, upright, neighborly men. In this commercial age such character is mainly made or lost in the pursuits of industry.

Whether a business man becomes a good man or not, depends mainly on the way in which he manages his business. He may be a good husband and father, charitable to the poor, and a devout church member, but if in his business he is greedy, hard-hearted, unjust, and tyrannical, the core of his character is bad. In the prevailing interest of his life his conduct is defective and it makes him essentially a bad man. Now the Church has in her membership hundreds of thousands of men whose characters are being formed by their business practises. She owes to these men the instruction and the moral guidance by which they may be saved from the fatal losses of manhood to which they are exposed, and established in virtue and honor. She must not say that she has no knowledge of these questions. She has no right to be

ignorant concerning practises that are blunting the consciences and destroying the souls of millions of her own members. In truth, this ignorance is largely feigned. The ethical principles involved in all these transactions are clear, and there is no more danger of error in dealing with them than is involved in any attempt to apply the principles of morality to the conduct of life. Always there is need of caution, of discretion, of just and balanced treatment of such problems, but this is not a reason why they should be ignored. Even bungling attempts to help men into the right way — if they are only honest and sincere — are far less dangerous than a cowardly avoidance. When the Church in the person of the priest and the Levite passed by the wounded man on the Jericho road, it may have pleaded that it was not

expert in caring for such cases. The Church can better afford to make many mistakes in enforcing the Christian law of industrial relations than to give the impression that the Christian law has nothing to do with industrial relations. In fact, it has everything to do with them, and the Church is not dealing fairly with a great multitude of its own members when it fails to show them just how the Christian law does apply to those relations with their fellowmen in which, more than in any other portion of their lives, the great values of character are gained or lost.

Beyond all this, the Church may well recognize some responsibility for the moral condition of the millions of the working people — many of whom are outside her membership. Her access to them is not, unhappily, so direct as to the employing class, but she must

not, therefore, ignore their moral need. And it is perhaps no less true of the working people than of their employers that their characters are profoundly affected by the manner in which they deal with what we call the Labor Question. I do not doubt that in the struggles and sacrifices of this conflict some precious gains of character are made; men and women learn to prefer the common good to individual gain and to bear one another's burdens. For all this we ought to be thankful. But no one can pass through a severe labor struggle without becoming painfully aware that the combatants on both sides are suffering vast moral injuries. War is hell, industrial war not less than international war; and because it is war among neighbors, the enmity engendered is apt to be more fierce and violent than that which we

feel toward a foreign foe. And often we find whole populations swept with hot blasts of anger, and men and women who are ordinarily kindly and humane cherishing the bitterest antipathies and pouring out the most terrible execrations against their fellow citizens. Nothing more ominous can be conceived than such a social inflammation. Out of it naturally spring violence and lawlessness; but even if these are restrained, the seething of such passions bodes ill to the peace and health of industrial society. Populations which have been through such an experience are seriously unfitted by it for good citizenship.

It is possible that some churches may not care much about this. They may say that they do not recognize social responsibilities. Even such churches cannot, however, deny that the moral

welfare of these millions of working men ought to be a matter of concern to them. And can it be doubted that the moral well-being of great multitudes is seriously impaired by the engendering of passions and hatreds in these labor wars? Good church members have confessed to me during the past few months that they were conscious of losing their hold on all the supports of religion; that there was so much bitterness in their hearts that they did not want to go to church, and that it was hard for them to pray. With those who owned no allegiance to the Church the case was probably no better. Is not the Church concerned with the fact that conditions exist under which great masses of the people round about it are getting into this state of mind?

Let us admit that the main business

of the Church is saving souls. I am ready to agree to this if it is understood that souls are just people, men and women. But give the phrase any meaning you will, and is it not plain that the Church will find it hard work to save souls that are inflamed and embittered by these labor contests, especially when there is among them a widespread resentment against the Church, growing out of a belief that its sympathies are with their antagonists? Is the Church likely to make much headway with its evangelistic work in populations thus affected? Is it not clear that something must be done to remove these misapprehensions and allay these resentments, before anything effectual can be done in the way of "saving souls"?

How shall the Church go to work to get these people into a better temper?

Surely that must be one of her urgent tasks. It will not be wise for her to begin by reproving the resentments of the working people and counseling submission. It will not do for her to assume that these uprisings on their part are mainly due to moral depravity. It will be necessary for her to show that she is aware of the fact that underneath all these surface eruptions of selfishness and passion there are fundamental questions of social justice; and that she is able to deal with these questions intelligently and fairly. It is not of much use to preach peace to insurgent laborers so long as they are in doubt as to whether you are willing that they should have justice.

The most cheering sign that has yet appeared in our sky of an improved attitude of the Church upon this question is the "Declaration of Principles"

unanimously adopted by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America — an organization representing seventeen millions of Protestant church members:

"We deem it the duty of all Christian people to concern themselves directly with certain practical industrial problems. To us it seems that the churches must stand —

"For equal rights and complete justice to all men in all stations of life.

"For the right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, a right ever to be strongly safeguarded against encroachments of every kind.

"For the right of workers to some protection against the hardships often resulting from the swift crises of industrial change.

"For the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.

"For the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational disease, injuries, and morality.

"For the abolition of child labor.

"For such regulations of the condition of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

"For the suppression of the 'sweating system.'

"For the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practicable point and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life.

"For the release from employment one day in seven.

"For a living wage as a minimum in every industry and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

"For the most equitable division of

the products of industry that can ultimately be devised.

"For the suitable provision for the old age of the workers and for those incapacitated by injury.

"For the abatement of poverty.

"To the toilers of America and to those who by organized effort are seeking to lift the crushing burdens of the poor, and to reduce the hardships and uphold the dignity of labor, this Council sends the greeting of human brotherhood and the pledge of sympathy and of help in a cause which belongs to all who follow Christ."

This is by far the most significant expression that organized religion has made in this country with respect to the labor question. It seems to answer explicitly and authoritatively all the questions which were raised at the beginning of this article. Several of

the denominations in their national bodies have reaffirmed this declaration. If the churches will stand together on this platform and enforce its principles by the teaching of their pulpits, the labor question will soon be in a fair way of solution.

Assuming the duty of the Church to deal with this question honestly and courageously, one or two further suggestions may be ventured.

Upon one outstanding fact the Church ought to fix its attention. In this great realm of labor, the realm in which the largest part of human energy is expended, the tendency is strong to make the economic fact the paramount fact, to keep human interests subordinate. The dollar is the principal thing; the man is a secondary consideration. If a man throws himself into the stream of ordinary business,

adopts its maxims, and accepts its ideals, will he not find himself unconsciously and inevitably exalting economic success above character or manhood?

If these things are so, if such is the drift of the modern industrialism, then, it seems to me, that the Christian Church has a very definite task upon its hands, which is nothing less than the moralization of the industrial régime. For if there is any meaning in the ethics of the Christ for which the Church is supposed to stand, the industrial order which holds the dollar higher than the man is not Christian but pagan; there is no paganism in Asia or Africa in more deadly hostility to the Kingdom of the Christ; and the first business of the Church is to storm it and subdue it and revolutionize it, in the name and by the power of the Christ. This may seem

a large order, but the church which has any comprehension of its mission will not dare to attempt anything less. Certainly the Church may expect to make its members believe the truth that Mammon is not the supreme deity, and that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. And as soon as the Church succeeds in making its own members believe that these things are so, it will not be long before the rest of the world will begin to believe them. And when the world begins to see that the man is worth more than the dollar, the central difficulty in the labor problem will be overcome; the economic fact will take its place below the human fact; our industries will be organized primarily in the interests of men, and the long-standing quarrel between capital and labor will be at an end.

Another large obligation of the Church to the laboring class arises out of the need to which reference was made in a preceding chapter of the completion of our democracy. But what, it will be asked, has the Church to do with the fulfilment of our democracy? The Church has nearly everything to do with it.

Where did we get our democracy? What is the basis of democracy? It is the fact of brotherhood. The truth of the divine fatherhood and the human brotherhood, which are the central truths of religion as taught by Jesus Christ, are the germinal truths of democracy. Whether it could grow out of any other principle we may not know; as a matter of fact, it never has. Outside of Christendom there have been no democracies.

In the American State, as we saw in

a former chapter, democracy lies at the foundation. Our American national life is based on brotherhood. The ethics of Christianity are incorporated into our political structure. The only part of our life in which the Christian law of brotherhood is yet in large measure repudiated is the industrial organization. This is the last of the great kingdoms of this world which does not bow the knee to Christ. It must be conquered by him and ruled by his law. That is the business which the Christian Church has now upon her hands. The Christian Church is here in the world to be the champion of brotherhood. She has no other message to speak to men concerning their relations one to another. "Sirs, ye are brethren," is her word to contending classes; and among brothers there are no masters and no slaves.

That is a truth with which she has no right to palter, and the hour has come when she must speak it with authority.

If any one should say that the Church is not called to teach politics or sociology, the answer is that she is certainly called to teach human brotherhood, and to resist and oppose with all the strength vouchsafed her, every institution or custom or device of men which minimizes or makes void the fact of brotherhood. She is at least entitled to offer the prayer that her Lord has taught her, and to make her teaching and her life to conform to it. When she opens her mouth to say "Our Father who art in heaven," she must remember that that petition is for every one that is born of woman, and she must understand what it implies. When she says "Hallowed be thy name," she must

not forget that the name thus made sacred is the name of the Father. When she says "Thy kingdom come," she must remember that the kingdom for which she prays is the kingdom of the Father — the kingdom in which none are subjects, but all are brothers. That is certainly her message. She has made emperors and kings and Kaisers understand it; now, she has a bigger task on hand, to make Mammon understand it. It will cost her something to do this; she will lose friends; but she has some friends that she can afford to lose that she may win the friendship of the poor of this world who are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which God has prepared for them that love him. And it is time for her to face the "Dark Tower," "blind as the fool's heart," garrisoned by greed and injustice, and

to set the slug-horn to her lips and blow: "The day of the common man has come. Christ has redeemed him; the nations of the earth have enfranchised him; it is time for you, captains of industry, to make him free of your domain. All he asks is to be clothed with the rights of a man. That you dare not deny him. That, in the name of Christ our Master, we claim for him; and we will never be silent until, in the whole kingdom of industry, that claim is conceded and that right is guaranteed."

And when she has thus delivered her soul by such fidelity to the employers, she ought to have a faithful word for the working men in their organizations. Would it not be something like this:

"The Church has been tardy, brother men, in her recognition of her obligation to speak the truth with

respect to this great matter which so much concerns you, but she has found her voice. Listen and judge. She would be faithless if she did not claim for you the rights of freemen, and the power to maintain for yourselves these rights in the kingdom of industry; but she would be false if she did not tell you that this enfranchisement in the industrial realm carries with it heavy responsibilities. Democracy means brotherhood; and when you set up your industrial democracy you must not forget that it means that you must act brotherly, not only to the members of your union, but also and equally to your employer. He is your brother, and every loyalty that you owe to the union you owe also to him, not only as individuals, but also as an organization.

"A trade-union can behave greedily

treacherously, unjustly; and men in crowds are often tempted to do things that no single man of them would consent to for an instant. You must learn, every man of you, to stand on your own feet, and stand in all your dealings with your employer for the things that are right and fair and honorable between man and man. Otherwise your industrial enfranchisement is a sham and will bring a curse. The industrial democracy holds in it the promise and potency of a prosperous and happy nation; it holds also in it the possibilities of pandemonium — confusion and strife and misery. We mean that you shall be free. We pray you, as if God were speaking by us, to use your freedom soberly and righteously — never for the profit of a class, always for the common good."

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

THE CASE AGAINST THE UNIONS

IN letters and newspaper comments which have come into my hands while these chapters have been appearing in *The Outlook*, a few points have been raised which I wish to consider. Let me first thank the many kind readers who have written to express their approval of the positions taken. Some of the most cordial expressions have come from employers of labor, and some of the most censorious from those who claim to be working men. One letter, signed "A Workingman," thus expostulates:

"In your case against the labor unions I find you very small indeed, for you are taking up the case of the rich against the poor. For Christ's sake let the poor alone. They have trouble enough. . . . It seems to me you do not need the money, or are you doing it for the money? You, as a

preacher of the gospel, should follow Christ, and he was kind to the poor." It is probable that this reader, like many others, had contented himself with reading the title of the article. It is because there are too many unionists of this type that we have so much trouble with the unions.

From a letter I take these questions: "Why does violence cease instantly that a strike is called off by union authorities, if such action is almost solely, as you suggest, perpetrated by outsiders, the lawless element, without connivance of or instigation by union men? If such acts can be promptly stopped, why can they not be prevented, if opposition to them is genuine?

"If the quotation from John Mitchell condemning violence and murder is more than a recognition that they are harmful to the cause and impolitic, why do not unions that he controls aid in bringing to justice and trial members whom they know perpetrate such acts?

"Is it not true that union men know themselves to be safe, as far as fellow members are concerned, no matter what

acts of violence they commit against a non-union man or a 'scab'? Then, is not every one of them *particeps criminis?* When union officials honestly do what they claim to the world to do in the repression of violence, then these acts will almost disappear."

It is undoubtedly true that the violence in all such cases is perpetrated largely by those who are in sympathy with the strikers, though not a few of the rioters are people who are fond of disorder, and who make the strike an opportunity of lawlessness. When the strike is called off, their excuse is removed.

But there is no doubt that union men are quite too tolerant of such disorder, and that by refusing to take vigorous measures to prevent it, they often incur a fearful responsibility. Here is the weak point in their case. Many of them are too willing that bloody and desperate deeds should be done in their interest. Many of them have too much faith in carnal warfare and too little in reason and patience and good will. Yet I should be far from believing that "every one of them" is consciously

or intentionally a partaker in these crimes of violence; nor is the sincerity of John Mitchell and those of like mind to be impugned because their followers sometimes trample on their counsels. A good many pastors find their church members constantly flouting the truth they try to teach and doing things for which they do not wish to be held responsible. It is not always quite clear that in such cases a minister ought to resign his charge; he may hope that by patience and fidelity he can bring these offenders to a better mind. The same rule applies to labor leaders.

I quite agree with my correspondent, however, in saying that union officials could put an end to most of this violence if they were determined to do it; and the fact that it is not done is a heavy count against them. And it must be admitted that the attitude of the labor leaders in the recent cases of the accused dynamiters leaves much to be desired. Organized labor cannot stand in an equivocal position before crimes of this nature. Somebody has committed each one of these dastardly crimes, and no people in this country have

so much interest in getting the miscreants detected and punished as the leaders of organized labor.

With respect to the petty and puerile restrictions upon work, here is the testimony of a journalist:

"In the course of the holiday advertising rush one of the evening papers found itself receiving more business than could be accommodated in its composing room, which was then somewhat limited in equipment, and the matrix of a full-page advertisement was secured from the morning paper in which it had appeared that morning, payment for same being duly made to the proprietor of the morning paper. This advertisement appeared in the evening edition, the only additional labor involved being the casting of a plate from the matrix. Happening in the office the next morning, which was Sunday, I found a couple of advertisement setters busy in the composing room, an unusual thing for that office. Investigation showed that these two printers were at work on the advertisement which had appeared the evening before. This was set up in the

regular way, proofs taken and read, corrections made, and everything put in readiness for the stereotyping room, after which the page was torn down and the type distributed. It seems that a ruling of the Typographical Union makes such a procedure necessary whenever there is an interchange of matrices among offices, the object naturally being to secure the maximum of work. Here was a case where two of the best compositors in the office spent the better part of Sunday, probably at time-and-a-half, in producing an article which was absolutely worthless, merely because of an arbitrary union regulation. To me it seems a practise with less excuse than the limitation of a workman's daily output."

There ought to be statesmanship enough in a union as intelligent as the Typographical Union to put an end to this sort of thing. The slight economic advantage which the union secures by such a rule is offset, ten times over, by the disgust and ill will which such a measure is bound to excite, not only in the employers, but in all just-minded people.

The following letter from the editor of *The International Molders' Journal* will help to correct any wrong impression which is made by the statement in the text. It is printed in full:

"*Cincinnati*, March 17, 1911.

"I have just finished reading your first article on the case against the labor union and have already secured the permission of *The Outlook* to reproduce your most recent article on trade-unions in that publication.

"I have read both articles with much pleasure and satisfaction, for they indicate a comprehensive and unbiased view of the problems which we loosely term 'the labor question.'

"I was, however, surprised and disappointed with the reference which you make on page 467 of the March issue of *The Outlook* relative to the trade-union attitude towards prison labor. Let me say in a candid, also in a most friendly spirit, that you have utterly failed to convey the true attitude of the trade-union towards prison labor. As an executive offi-

cer of the International Molders' Union for twelve years and as one who has frequently appeared before the committees of legislative bodies on contract convict labor bills, I should be in a position to know what the trade-union attitude is. Let me state it briefly.

"I do not know of a single intelligent trade-unionist or trade-union official who favors abolishing convict labor. The opposition of the trade-union movement is directed towards the kind of labor which the convict performs, and the method through which this labor enters into direct and most injurious competition with that of the workman.

"Our opposition is against the contract convict labor system through which the labor of the convict is made to result in profit to the contractor, the convict's welfare and reformation being a secondary and frequently negligible factor, the prime motive being that of any practical business man — the making of money, with this advantage that the convict can be driven to a physical limit which is impossible in the case of free labor.

"In the shirt making industry, shoe making industry, saddlery, and several others, convict labor has ruined the industry for the free workers. In my own trade the hollow ware made by contract convict labor has driven the hollow ware business entirely out of the foundries all over the country. I am not beyond the mark when I inform you that there are not in this country to-day one hundred molders engaged in making cast-iron kettles, spiders, and other cast-iron kitchen hollow ware. Let me give you an illustration.

"With other trade-unionists in this state I was active in endeavoring to have a new penitentiary built in Columbus by convicts. If this is done, it will throw out of employment the free labor which would be employed if the labor was not done by convicts. Here, then, are a number of brick layers, masons, etc. who would be prevented from securing work on a new penitentiary.

"This, however, is not a serious matter and is one against which we can make no objection. Let us assume that the contract convict labor system still obtained

in Ohio and, instead of the convicts being contracted to hardware, hollow ware, and other prison labor contract manufacturers, they were contracted to building contractors and used in the city of Columbus to erect buildings: they would then present an entirely different form of competition with free labor, and the contractor, paying the state from $.75 to $1.00 a day for the convict labor, would speedily force contractors employing free labor to meet this competition or go out of business. The result of employing convicts in the erection of buildings in Ohio under the direction of contract convict contractors would not only throw a certain number of building trade workmen out of employment, but, in addition and of far greater importance, would force a reduction in wages on all of the free workmen in the building trades.

"I have never yet seen a statement emanating from the rank and file of the officers of the trade-unions advocating idleness for convicts. On the other hand, I do know that they are lending their influence to have the convict placed at such occupations as road making, farming, etc., which would

enable the convict to redeem himself if he so desired and nature had not cursed him too heavily with moral deformity at his birth to make this impossible.

"Deeply appreciative of the interest which you have taken in the workman's efforts to improve his standard of living, I remain,

"Respectfully yours,
"JOHN P. FREY,
"Editor."

APPENDIX II

THE REASON FOR THE UNIONS

SOME complaint has been made of my representation of the attitude of the average employer toward unionism. No sweeping statements are made in the text; I have asserted that there is "a goodly number" of employers "whose works show that they do believe in the unions, and who are seeking to enter into cordial co-operation with them." I have, however, expressed the opinion that "most employers" qualify their faith in unionism by statements which imply that the unions in which they believe are not those which assert the right of the men to have a voice in the determination of wages and conditions of labor. Just what proportion of American employers frankly concede to the unions this right of collective bargaining it would be impossible to say; my own impression, derived from pretty large ac-

quaintance and observation, is that it is not large, and that it is not, at present, increasing. The unions are, indeed, tolerated in many industries, but the majority of employers who tolerate them would abolish them if they could. This attitude is due, in large part, to the abuses which we have considered in the previous chapter, and also to the fact that employers, as a class, have not carefully considered what would be the consequence of abolishing the unions. I am far from believing that the majority of employers intend such consequences as are here depicted; if they clearly saw what their policy must result in, most of them would be ready to reconsider.

Most of the employers who say that they believe in the unions are firm in their maintenance of the open shop, and it is difficult to regard the non-union element in an open shop in any other light than as an ally of the employer in his resistance to unionism.

Many of the employers who tolerate unions refuse to recognize them. They will consult *with their men* on any question

concerning the interests of the men, but they will have no dealings with representatives of the unions. Such employers are, of course, opposed to the arbitration of industrial disputes. They "have nothing to arbitrate."

Now, as has been said, I know of no way of finding out how large a proportion of the employers of labor maintain this unfriendly attitude toward the unions. That there is "a goodly number" of those who are ready to enter into cordial and cooperative relations with them I have admitted. I wish that that number might increase, and I am persuaded that many employers who now antagonize them would change their minds if they would look a little farther ahead. This is what, in this chapter, I have been trying to enable them to do.

With those who have written to express the opinion that the number of employers who are ready to cooperate with organized labor is larger than my estimate I should be glad to agree. In such a spirit of friendly cooperation is our hope of peace and welfare. But I confess that the pros-

pect of such an amicable adjustment of this great dispute is not so bright as I could wish. Sometimes it looks as though the chasm which divides the two classes were growing too wide and too deep to be bridged or filled up, and that nothing could avert the struggle in which the existing industrial order must be overthrown. It is in the sincere belief that such an industrial revolution, in the present state of public intelligence, would be disastrous to the commonwealth, that these pages have been written.

APPENDIX III

INDUSTRY AND DEMOCRACY

THE practical difficulty of such a situation as that which is imagined in the text, where the employer frankly proposes recognition of the union and cooperation with it, arises from the action of national organizations of labor. The national body sometimes undertakes to enforce, by a strike, demands which the local union would not be inclined to make, and the cooperation between the employer and the local union is ruptured by the interference of the national organization. This is possible, however, largely because the relations between the employers and the local unions are, in most cases, distant or unfriendly. If these relations were, in the great majority of cases, amicable and satisfactory, the power of the national organization to disturb them would be greatly reduced. And nothing is more to

be desired, in the interest both of employer and of employed, than that the local bond be made so strong that outside influences cannot easily disturb it. Just as home-rule is the best policy in municipal government, and the self-governing forces of the local community ought to be strengthened in every practicable way, so the effort of the intelligent employer should be to keep himself in such relations with the labor organizations, that the most of the questions arising shall be settled at home.

APPENDIX IV

CROSS-LIGHTS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS

WHAT about labor organizations among government employees? What are their rights and obligations? Should they become affiliated with the American Federation of Organized Labor and subject to its control? Have they a right to strike for higher wages and better conditions of service? These questions have already arisen in some of the departments at Washington, and it is highly important that they be promptly and thoroughly discussed and definitely settled.

For my own part, I can see no justification for any organization of government employees for ordinary trade-union purposes. It may be lawful to organize mutual benefit societies among the government employees, but not associations whose purpose it is to enforce their de-

mands by striking. A strike, to make the best of it, is a species of warfare; and it would be a political absurdity to grant the right of government employees to organize for warfare against the government. The Constitution defines treason as levying war against the United States, and any association of men which proposes by force to resist, or by combination to interrupt the operation of the laws, incurs the condemnation of that just provision.

The right of the organized employees of any private person or corporation to strike for improved conditions arises out of the fact that the employed have no other way of enforcing their claim. There is a dispute between employer and employed about wages or hours of work; there is no tribunal to which it can be referred; the employer refuses arbitration; the only remedy of the employed is to refuse to work, and thus to interrupt, so far as possible, the industrial operation, and cause such a reduction in the profits of the employer that he shall be forced to accede to their demand. The scale of wages against which the men are striking is one which

they have no voice in fixing; it is an ultimatum offered to them which they can take or leave; they exercise their right in unitedly refusing to take it.

But the case of the government employee is radically different from the case of the employee of a private person or corporation. In the first place the government employee is a citizen; he is himself a responsible member of the government; he has had, or ought to have had, a voice in fixing the terms and conditions under which he is working; if they are not satisfactory he has the privilege and the power of joining with his other fellow citizens in making them satisfactory. There is, in his case, an existing tribunal to which the whole matter can be referred, and that is the will of the people. To that tribunal let him make his appeal, and submit to its decision. It may take time to secure the popular action by which his conditions will be improved, but he has no right to seek redress in any other way. A strike of government employees is the attempt of a class of citizens to interrupt, in their own interest, the operations of the govern-

ment, upon which the comfort and welfare of the whole people depend. No class of citizens can reasonably claim the right to do any such thing.

When the French employees on the government railways undertook to enforce their demands by striking, Premier Briand, a Socialist, promptly "called the men to the colors." It was a sharp reminder that patriotic men in the employ of the nation cannot form any combinations of their own to resist the national authority. That savors of mutiny.

One reason why some of us are ready to have all the public service industries pass under the control of the government is our wish to have them placed upon a basis where industrial war will be impossible. If the right to strike is to be asserted by combinations of government employees, that advantage will be lost, and the last state of our industrial conflict will be worse than the first.

Such being the case, it is, of course, highly improper for associations of government employees to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor or any other

organization which undertakes to determine for them the terms and conditions under which they must perform their service. They might as well put themselves under the protection of Canada or Mexico.

APPENDIX V

THE CHURCH AND THE LABOR QUESTION

IN some of the letters from employers the question has been raised, with some acerbity, as to the right of a minister of the gospel to have any opinion, or publicly to express any opinion, upon the Labor Question. "It would be impertinent for us," these objectors say, for substance, "to volunteer any suggestions about your professional work, and it is equally impertinent for you to offer counsels to us about the management of our business."

I think that a little discrimination is needed just here. With respect to some parts of my professional work it would not, probably, be modest for my friends, the captains of industry, to venture on criticisms. Upon the authorship of the Pentateuch or the interpretation of the Athanasian Creed they might naturally

hesitate to differ with me. But there are a great many matters of which it is my business to speak, with respect to which they might, with entire propriety, challenge my teaching. If I should inculcate the doctrine that children should not be required to obey their parents, but should be permitted to do as they please in all things; or if I should tell servants that they might justifiably steal from their masters if they would only put their plunder into the contribution box, my friends, the captains of industry, would have a perfect right publicly to find fault with my professional work, and try to bring me to a better mind. There are certain very important parts of my professional work as a Christian teacher, on which all intelligent men have a right to form and express opinions.

Similarly there are many parts of the work of a captain of industry, on which it would be absurd for me to offer any suggestions. I know nothing at all about the manufacture of automobiles, or the production of woolen cloth, or the marketing of coal, or the management of credits; and

it would be a grotesque impertinence for me to try to tell any business man how to manage these parts of his business. I have not attempted any such thing.

But there are certain human relationships which these captains of industry sustain to the men in their employ about which I have some knowledge. It is a large part of my business to find out how human beings can live together peaceably, usefully, and prosperously. The teachings of Jesus Christ, which it is my professional business to understand and enforce, are largely concerned with this very thing. The principles of this teaching apply as directly to industrial society as to any other form of human association. It is my business to make this application. If I failed to do so, I should be unfaithful to my commission. This is all that I have ever undertaken to do. And when, in doing so, I am admonished that I am intruding into interests with which I have no concern, I must plead not guilty to the accusation.

It is open to any one to say that the principles of Christianity do not furnish

the true and adequate rule of human conduct; that it is impossible to apply them to the relations of men in economic society. One who thinks so is, of course, justified in objecting to the teachings of this book. A man may believe with Nietzsche that the religion of good will is a pestilent distemper; that the ideal man is hard-hearted, unscrupulous, merciless. To those who hold any opinion akin to this, the entire argument of this book would appear to be, not only futile, but mischievous. It has been assumed, however, in all this argument, that the principles of our Christian civilization are valid principles; that Christ's summary of the moral law is a true and adequate statement of the fundamental human obligation. It is also assumed that it is the business of the Christian Church to apply this law to all human relations; and that the Christian minister has no choice about making this application to industrial society as to other forms of society.

Industrial society has a technical and mechanical side, with which the Christian minister has nothing to do; but it has also

a human side with which he has everything to do. The one supreme question about industrial society is the question what kind of men it is producing, both in the shop and in the counting room; and what kind of social relations it is cultivating between employers and employed. If the classes brought together in industrial society are all becoming better, happier, stronger, more hopeful, more contented, and if the spirit of friendship and cooperation is binding them together more and more closely, the Christian Church may feel that she is fulfilling her function; but if conditions in all respects the reverse of this are appearing, it will be well for her to look well to her ways and see wherein she is failing of her duty.

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